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horror strings, on the set

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Volume 21 Number 3



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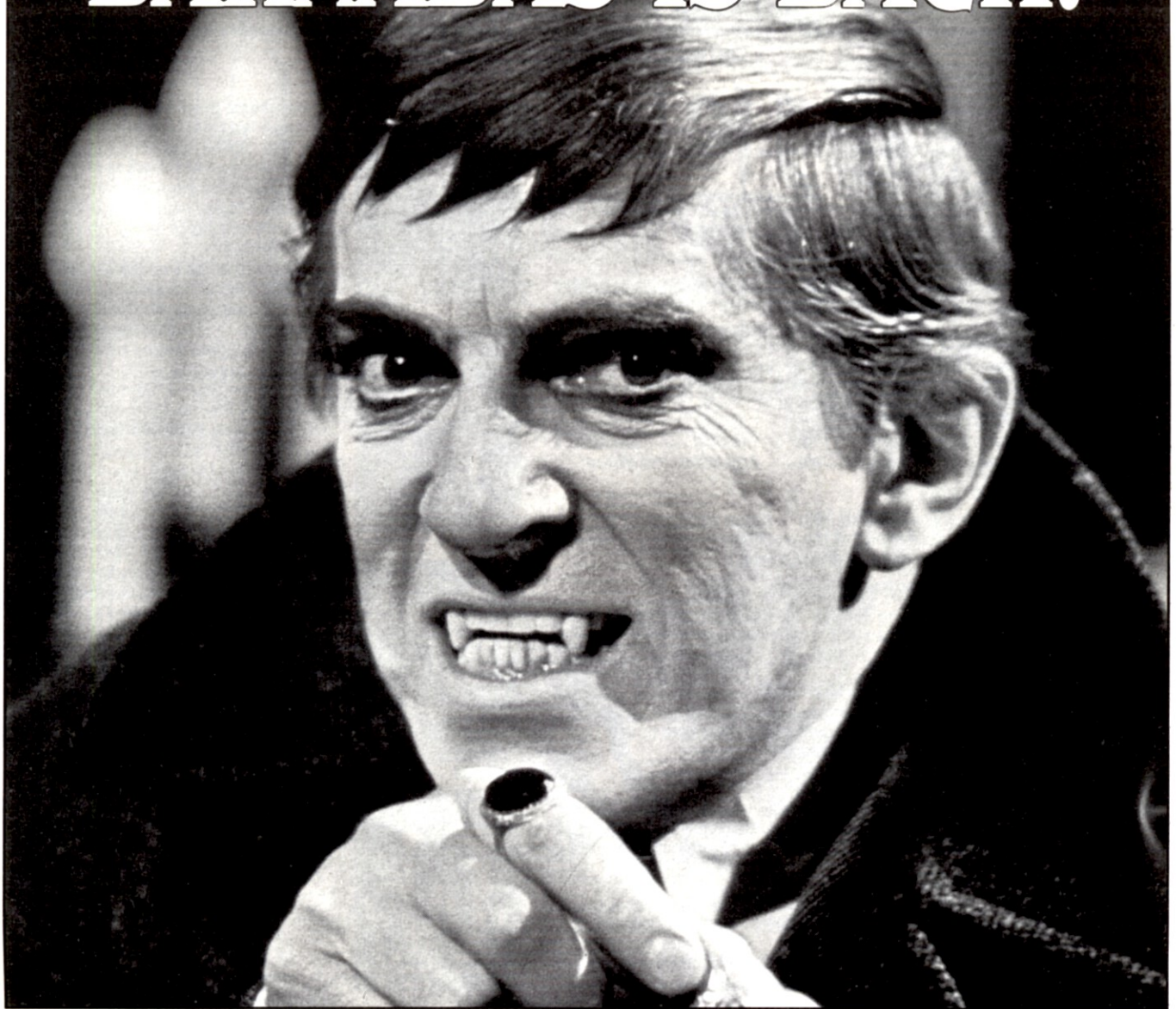


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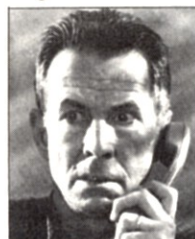
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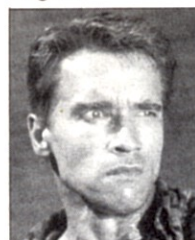
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Barnabas, Stephen King, Chucky, Edgar Allan Poe, Norman Bates, NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD... horror rules the nation's movie screens and its video airwaves. Halloween is on the horizon. Welcome to our issue previewing the season's line-up of things that go bump in the night.

Halloween has traditionally provided a bumper crop of horror offerings, but the field this year seems more crowded than ever, rivalling the crush of product usually reserved for the lucrative summer playing season.

Our cover story is devoted to the vampire of the hour, Barnabas Collins, who is lurking in the wings to make his debut on NBC as soon as one of the network's regular fall series falters in the ratings. It shouldn't be a long wait. TV reporter Mark Dawidziak takes a look at the fondly remembered daytime series starring Jonathan Frid, and the new prime-time version featuring Ben Cross as the reluctant bloodsucker. Dawidziak focuses on series creator Dan Curtis, an unsung genre auteur whose credits include the popular NIGHT STALKER as well as the finest version of DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE ever filmed.

Michael Frasher takes us on the set of the color remake of George Romero's classic NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD in Pittsburgh. Frasher talked to Tom Savini, Romero's makeup protege-turned-director, as well as producers Russell Streiner and John A. Russo, who made the original film with Romero more than twenty years ago. These days Frasher learned, talking to makeup supervisors Everett Burrell and John Vulich, the zombies are designed by computer. As a companion piece, critic Thomas Doherty takes another look at Romero's original film to fathom why it still holds us spellbound.

Romero will be competing with himself at the boxoffice, where his Poe anthology TWO EVIL EYES, co-directed with Dario Argento, also makes a Halloween appearance. Two on-set reports detail filming the Poe homage in Pittsburgh, with an all-star cast including Harvey Keitel.

So get ready, it's time for trick or treat.

Frederick S. Clarke

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JACOB'S LADDER

By Sheldon Teitelbaum

Brit director Adrian Lyne has few metaphysical bones in his lank body. You can see that best in his work. FLASH-DANCE, he acknowledges, was a piece of fluff. FATAL ATTRACTION was a suspense thriller whose success as an outright horror film—and the undeserved reputation it earned him as a misogynist—still mystifies him. And 9½ WEEKS was his attempt to revel in the kind of excess seldom seen in an other-than-a-blue movie.

So when Lyne saw a brief halo appear over writer Bruce Joel Rubin's (BRAINSTORM, GHOST) head during one of their early meetings over their upcoming production of Rubin's long-touted script, JACOB'S LADDER, he experienced a brief epiphany. True, Rubin had mastered some of the alleged mysteries of the East—he did quite nicely teaching meditation. But auras atop an author were a bit much, even by L.A. standards. The universe was even queerer than an Angelino could ever suppose.

Whether real or imagined, that experience probably stood Lyne in good stead to persuade a major studio to hire him and make a movie of Rubin's screenplay. It is a peculiar universe indeed in which one of the most widely read and universally admired scripts in Hollywood could languish, unmade, for nearly a decade (16:1:19). For Hollywood, however, this was fairly routine. After all, said Lyne over a chicken dijon lunch on Sunset Boulevard in August, "There's no other movie to point to that it's like."

JACOB'S LADDER is about a Vietnam veteran, played by Tim Robbins (BULL DURHAM, ERIK THE VIKING), whose tormented dreams about his wartime experiences appear to be spilling over into his life. Faced with demonic apparitions at nearly every turn, at first Robbins suspects his sanity. Eventually, however, he learns a truth about his condition which renders even the prospect of

Metaphysical horror by Adrian Lyne, director of FATAL ATTRACTION.



Tim Robbins as Viet Nam vet Jacob Singer doesn't believe his eyes, aided by a friend (Matt Craven). Tri-Star opens the stylish horror film nationally November 2.

insanity preferable to reality.

The film, which also stars Elizabeth Pena and Danny Aiello, finally went into production in September 1989. Most of it was shot during an almost leisurely sixteen weeks in and around New York City. The tab—\$26 million. Columbia Pictures is slated to open the Carolco Production nationwide November 2.

Lyne, the latest in a long line of major directors interested in taking a stab at JACOB'S LADDER, pitched it to Paramount, for whom he had made FATAL ATTRACTION. Their gratitude, however, proved somewhat less than boundless, when the project got budgeted. "No one ever wanted to make FATAL ATTRACTION either," said Lyne, "but I thought, 'Well shit, I made that studio a lot of money.' With \$25 million, now the studio average for a film, this project wasn't that expensive."

At first, Paramount, in the guise of studio head Ned Tannen, expressed suffi-

cient interest in the project to option the script. But Tannen was later replaced by Syd Ganis, who, said Lyne, neither liked nor understood the script. JACOB'S LADDER was subsequently put into turnaround, and about eighteen months ago, Lyne started knocking on doors again. But no one wanted to do it. "Columbia wasn't interested," he said, "and at Universal, they looked at me as if I were nuts." At Carolco, however, Lyne hit paydirt. Carolco chairman Mario Kassar, he said, loved the script. "He's like a studio head of old," exclaimed Lyne. "He flies his company by the seat of his pants."

Then Lyne and Rubin began to grapple with the script. "He was pretty fucking good," said Lyne. "It must be infinitely frustrating for a writer to have their vision changed. He could have been more pissed-off than he was. We fought tooth and nail for a year, but never to where we had given up on each other."

Lyne said he and Rubin tended to differ when it came to settling on the kinds of apparitions depicted in the film. Rubin's nether-

worldly visions, said Lyne, were rooted in established mythic archetypes. Thus a devil he conceived might possess the standard animal accoutrements harking back to the Middle Ages—bat wing, cloven hooves and so on. Lyne felt that his close friend Ridley Scott had actually said the last word on that kind of devil in LEGEND. For JACOB'S LADDER, Lyne wanted creatures which were more organically human—or rather, inhuman.

"All through the movie you're dealing with demons and angels and hell and heaven, and I spent a year, maybe more, trying to wrestle with how to do it—how to do a devil with horns and not make people laugh," said Lyne. "I tried to make it all human-based—sort of *thalidomidey*—fleshy, horns from the bone, a tail that looks a little like a *shlong*. I didn't want these things easily dismissed as too familiar. I did a lot of shaking, vibrating, tor-

continued on page 61

OPENINGS: OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

THE AMBULANCE Oct. 12

Triumph/Epic. Directed by Larry Cohen. With: Eric Roberts, James Earl Jones, Megan Gallagher, Richard Bright, Janine Turner, Eric Braeden.

Quirky horror specialist Larry Cohen (*IT'S ALIVE*, *THE STUFF*) wrote and directed this shocker in the vein of *COMA*, which opens regionally in major markets. Eric Roberts plays a New York City comic book artist on the trail of a mysterious ambulance which picks up patients undergoing medical emergencies but never delivers them to any hospital. James Earl Jones is a skeptical cop on the case, Megan Gallagher plays a helpful police-officer and love interest for Roberts, and Eric Braeden (Forbin in *COLLOSSUS: THE FORBIN PROJECT*) does a turn as the evil mastermind behind the kidnapping.



Larry Cohen (r) directs Eric Roberts and Megan Gallagher on New York locations for *THE AMBULANCE*, horror from Triumph/Epic which opens October 12.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD Oct. 19

Columbia. Directed by Tom Savini. With: Pat Tallman, Tony Todd, Bill Moseley, Katie Finneran, William Butler.

George Romero wrote this color remake of his 1968 black-and-white low budget horror classic, and hand-picked makeup protegee Tom Savini to direct. Not wishing to go head-to-head with Stephen King, Columbia moved up the release one week so as not to compete with Paramount's *GRAVEYARD SHIFT*. See page 16.

GRAVEYARD SHIFT Oct. 26

Paramount. Directed by Ralph S. Singleton. With: David Andrews, Stephen Macht, Kelly Wolf, Andrew Divoff, Brad Dourif.

Paramount laid claim to Halloween this year with this adaptation of a story from Stephen King's *Night Shift* collection, the first of three King adaptations to reach the screen before year's end. See page 8.

TWO EVIL EYES Oct. 26

Taurus Entertainment. Directed by George Romero and Dario Argento. With: Madeline Potter, Harvey Keitel, John Amos, Adrienne Barbeau.

George Romero and Dario Argento

to's homage to the dark genius of Edgar Allan Poe, with a top cast, opens regionally in major markets against stiff competition in a crowded horror field. See page 46.

EVE OF DESTRUCTION Oct.

Orion. Directed by Duncan Gibbins. With: Renee Soutendijk, Gregory Hines, Kevin McCarthy, Ross Malinger.

Orion has tentatively set late October to open their *TERMINATOR* in high heels, Dutch screen star Renee Soutendijk as an unstoppable, rampaging android. Hooper Gregory Hines plays a straight dramatic role as the anti-terrorist, counter-insurgency expert assigned to track her down. See 21:2:10.

DARK SHADOWS Oct.

NBC-TV. Directed by Dan Curtis. With: Ben Cross, Jean Simmons, Roy Thinnes, Barbara Steele, Joanna Going.

Barnabas has been promised the first slot as a replacement for faltering shows that debut this fall. It shouldn't take long. See page 24.

JACOB'S LADDER Nov. 2

Tri-Star/Caroleco. Directed by Adrian Lyne. With: Tim Robbins, Matt Craven

A supernatural shocker from director Adrian Lyne, who gave us *FATAL ATTRACTION*, and screenwriter Bruce Joel Rubin, who penned *GHOST*, last summer's runaway genre hit. See page 5.

CHILD'S PLAY 2 Nov. 9

Universal. Directed by John Lafia. With: Alex Vincent, Christine Elise, Jenny Agutter, Gerrit Graham, Brad Dourif.

Chucky, the doll from hell, was a surprise horror hit when released around this time in 1988. Now he's new and improved. See page 12.

STEPHEN KING'S "IT" Nov. 11

ABC-TV/Lorimar. Directed by Tommy Lee Wallace. With: Annette O'Toole, John Ritter, Harry Anderson, Dennis Christopher, Tim Curry, Tim Reid.

ABC kicks off the November ratings sweeps period with this four-hour miniseries based on King's best-seller. Besides the stellar cast, there's stop-motion effects by *Fantasy II*. The second of two, two-hour install-

ments airs Tuesday, November 14, after a Monday night recess for NFL football. Which show will have more graphic violence—it's a toss up. See page 9.

THE RESCUERS DOWN UNDER Nov. 16

Walt Disney. Directed by Hendel Butoy and Mike Gabriel. With voices of: George C. Scott, Bob Newhart, Eva Gabor, John Candy.

Even Disney is getting into the sequel act—their first in animation—with this follow-up to their 1977 cartoon feature *THE RESCUERS*. It's not by the team responsible for last season's *THE LITTLE MERMAID*. Mike Gabriel and Hendel Butoy, supervising animators on *OLIVER AND COMPANY* (1988) make their directing debut. Eva Gabor and Bob Newhart again give voice to mice adventurers Bernard and Miss Bianca, as their Rescue Aid Society saves a young boy in Australia from the clutches of an evil poacher, voiced by George C. Scott. John Candy provides the ad-lib craziness for Orville, their sea-fowl transportation, and the action features a dashing rodent outback guide that sounds a trifle reminiscent of *CROCODILE DUNDEE*.

PREDATOR II Nov. 30

20th Century Fox. Directed by Stephen Hopkins. With: Danny Glover, Gary Busey.

Stephen Hopkins, the director of *NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET V*, brings Fox's extraterrestrial jungle slasher to the big city. But does Fox have a franchise without Arnold Schwarzenegger? See facing page.

PSYCHO IV Nov.

Showtime/Universal. Directed by Mick Garris. With: Anthony Perkins, Henry Thomas, Olivia Hussey, Warren Frost.

A new installment written by Joseph Stefano, who scripted the Alfred Hitchcock original, filmed as part of the tour at Universal Studios, Florida. See page 46.

BOXOFFICE SURVEY: GENRE OPENS NEW DECADE WITH ROSY TOTALS

An analysis of the Top Grossing Films, as reported in *Variety's* "Weekend Boxoffice Report" reveals that in the first 26 weeks of 1990 revenue from horror, fantasy, and science fiction films totaled a robust \$631 million while film grosses in general reached \$1.476 billion. (Figures are samples based on weekend tallies.)

In the first half the genre's 42.8% share of total boxoffice is almost even with its share this time last year (42%), continuing 1989's rebound over previous years to highs not seen since 1982 (44%). Though summer films

have performed less well than expected, science fiction and fantasy films are primarily responsible for the genre's success, earning \$354 million and \$195 million (respectively), while horror boxoffice, once again, grossed a substantially lower \$81 million.

Science fiction film revenue accounted for nearly twice as much of the total boxoffice take as it did last year, with entries ranging from the comic book-inspired *TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES* to the action-oriented *THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER*. In fantasy, the much ballyhooed *DICK*

TRACY lead its field.

Science fiction films accounted for 8.3% of all films and 24% of receipts in the first half of 1990; fantasy films accounted for 10.4% of all films and 13.3% of receipts; while horror films accounted for 9.4% of all films and 5.5% of receipts.

Actual grosses for the top genre films in the *Variety* totals are listed at right (through 8/19). For breakdown by genre, titles are indicated as horror (h), fantasy (f), and science fiction (sf), followed by the number of weeks each title made it into the weekly listings since January.

TOP GENRE FILMS OF '90

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES (sf, 19)	\$132,530,493
THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER (sf, 23)	\$120,376,109
TOTAL RECALL (sf, 10)	\$115,105,635
DICK TRACY (f, 8)	\$103,108,943
GHOST (f, 5)	\$ 99,166,346
BACK TO THE FUTURE PART III (sf, 6)	\$ 68,923,350
ARACHNOPHOBIA (h, 4)	\$ 45,053,945
ROBOCOP 2 (sf, 7)	\$ 43,912,908
GREMLINS 2 (f, 8)	\$ 39,862,859
JOE VERSUS THE VOLCANO (f, 18)	\$ 39,381,963
JUNGLE BOOK (f, 5)	\$ 37,969,769
PROBLEM CHILD (f, 3)	\$ 37,205,420
THE LITTLE MERMAID (f, 19)	\$ 34,326,216
ALWAYS (f, 13)	\$ 27,550,850

PREDATOR II

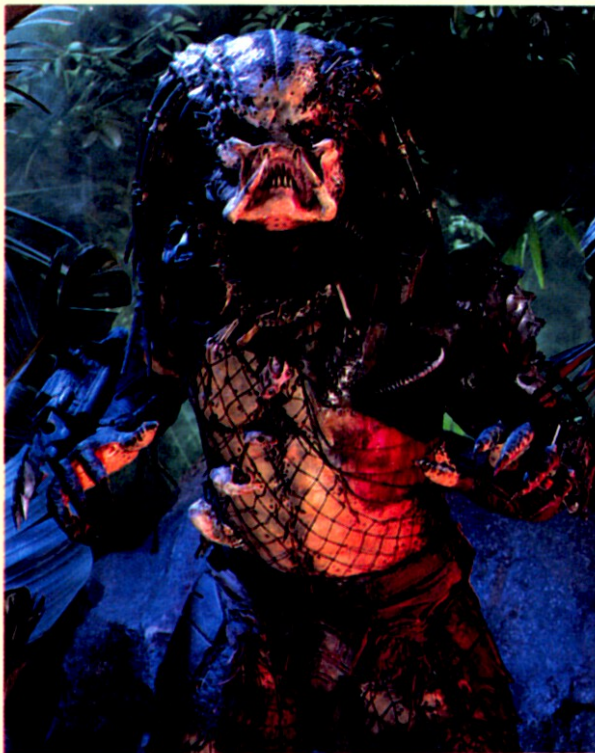
The extraterrestrial slasher is back, but is it a franchise without Schwarzenegger?

By Steve Biodrowski

The hunt continues in *PREDATOR II*, but this time the hapless human quarry is pursued by a deadly alien through an urban jungle, rather than a vegetal one. The year is 1995, ten years after Arnold Schwarzenegger's Dutch Schaeffer defeated the predator that stalked and eliminated his elite Special Forces team on a secret rescue mission in Central America for the C.I.A. The city is in the midst of a record-breaking heat wave while rival gangs of Columbians and Jamaicans vie for control of the lucrative cocaine trade. In the midst of this carnage comes a new predator, whose killings are at first mistaken for a part of the drug war.

Danny Glover stars as Detective Lieutenant Mike Harrigan, a modern-day manhunter whose skills and instincts make him a worthy "first-rate trophy" for the alien hunter. Gary Busey, cast against type, plays Keyes, a mysterious federal agent, supposedly a member of the Drug Enforcement Agency sent to wipe out the gang wars but actually a member of the scientific team hoping to capture the predator and learn the secrets of its weapons technology. Schwarzenegger does not return; a brief dialogue reference informs us that the sole survivor of the previous alien encounter "disappeared without a trace, six months later." 20th Century-Fox opens the sequel nationwide November 30, moving up the release from the Christmas date advertised on posters and trailers, thus avoiding competition with Stephen King's *MISERY*.

Despite the new cast, many of the behind-the-camera credits remain the same, beginning with producers Larry Gordon, Joel Silver, and John Davis. Stan Winston returns to provide makeup effects, not only for the main predator, but also for several other members of its species seen briefly near the film's conclusion. As an inside joke, one of Winston's alien heads from *ALIENS* appears, amongst skulls of



Fox's Predator (Kevin Peter Hall), in makeup by Stan Winston, goes from the jungle to the big city in his second outing. It took Paramount seven films to move Jason to the Big Apple from Camp Crystal Lake.

various other interstellar species in the predator's trophy case. R/Greenberg Associates again handle the opticals for the predator's camouflage cloaking device and infrared vision. New opticals include "ultra-violet" vision, which the alien utilizes to thwart heat-insulated suits worn by federal agents as a defense against its heat-sensitive infrared vision. Jim and John Thomas again provide the screenplay, which inserts its science fiction/horror elements into a police/thriller formula. The new kid on the block is director Stephen Hopkins, responsible for *A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET V* (1989), which was a boxoffice disappointment for New Line Cinema.

The new script should please fans of the original film. The narrative is lean but solid, emphasizing action without deteriorating into an episodic series of set-pieces.

Glover's role is effectively brushed-in with a few broad strokes which convincingly establish him as a credible protagonist for the new predator. The supporting cast is tagged with character traits that make them recognizable without being stereotypical. The police-detective format provides a structure sufficiently different to prevent the story from being a complete reread, since this time the lead character is on the trail of the predator's killings from the very beginning.

However, there are some weaknesses, including an obvious attempt to set up yet another sequel that results in an ending not altogether satisfying. It comes as no surprise that Busey is willing to sacrifice human lives in order to capture the predator. His dialogue at one point sounds like equal measures of Dr. Carrington in *THE THING* and Ash in *ALIEN*. Also, rewriting has left some dangling threads. The predator's pursuit of Glover seems less like a hunt than a personal vendetta, suggesting earlier drafts tailored to Schwarzenegger. Reportedly, Schwarzenegger was courted to reprise his role but ultimately declined. Action star Steven Seagal was mentioned as a possible replacement before Glover got the nod.

Perhaps the most amusing (and incredible) bit of science fiction in the script is less the result of speculation than rewriting to change the story's location. Shooting was switched from New York to Los Angeles to save on production costs. The film's original budget of \$17 million has reportedly sky-rocketed to \$35 million. In one of the script's major set pieces, the predator interrupts a confrontation between a gang of hoodlums, brandishing a sharpened screwdriver, and a Bernard Goetz-type victim carrying a handgun—on a subway train. Clearly *PREDATOR II* is set in an alternate universe wherein Los Angeles has finally developed a public transportation system. □

Stephen King's Graveyard Shift

Halloween kicks off King triple bill shocks.

By Gary Wood

GRAVEYARD SHIFT is just one of seven Stephen King adaptations in various stages of production and development and the first of three to reach audiences at the end of this year. Based on a short story from King's popular *Night Shift* anthology about mill workers battling giant rats, starring Brad Dourif as "the Exterminator," Paramount Pictures opens the film nationwide for Halloween on October 26.

"Anybody can make a movie out of anything of mine if they have enough money," said King. "If it's a major novel, I want to get paid major bucks." King said he got

The film's tale of giant killer rats is taken from a story in King's best-selling horror anthology *Nightshift*.



King on the set of GRAVEYARD SHIFT, which Paramount opens nationwide October 26.

\$1 million "in advance" for PET SEMATARY, the successful 1989 Paramount release that spurred the current King production boom. For GRAVEYARD SHIFT, King said he took just \$2,500 to option the property to Bill Dunn, an ex-school teacher and fellow Maine resident who was a location scout on CREEPSHOW II and a location manager on PET SEMATARY, both of which filmed in Maine. The only difference said King, was that "it's a short story, and it's a small company that's got interesting ideas that doesn't have much money. You pay as you go, as far as I'm concerned."

Dunn, with King, had been instrumental in forming the Maine film office, a spur to the local economy, and based the production of GRAVEYARD SHIFT in King's home town of Bangor. Armed with an already completed script by John Esposito, written for another producer whose equally generous

King option had run out, Dunn brought in Ralph S. Singleton as director and co-producer. Singleton, associate producer of PET SEMATARY and author of a series of books on filmmaking, makes his directing debut on the picture.

Esposito expanded King's slight, sixteen page story, adding elements he felt were in keeping with King's style and *oeuvre*. In the story, a mill's cleanup crew discovers sub-basements and tunnels with larger and larger rats. Esposito added the flavor and pacing of ALIENS, complete with the inevitable Creature which the hero must battle for survival. King was said to have given the script, Esposito's first, his ultimate nod of approval.

Dunn found the backing for his production from Larry Sugar Entertainment, which had mounted the foreign theatrical release of a feature edited from the CBS miniseries of King's SALEM'S LOT. Sugar

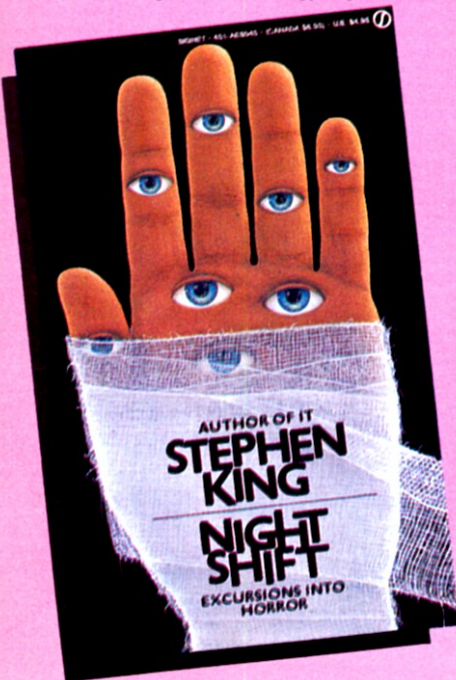
was brought-in by Singleton, whose wife Joan—GRAVEYARD SHIFT'S associate producer—had worked with him years before at Warner Bros. Filming began last June on a budget of \$10.5 million. Also featured in the cast are David Andrews, Stephen Macht, Kelly Wolf and Andrew Divoff.

Sugar's decision to proceed with the project as an independent was heavily influenced by the boxoffice success of PET SEMATARY. "Certainly my interest was piqued by the fact that PET SEMATARY had performed so well,"

said Sugar. "If we could meet a very difficult schedule and be the very next Stephen King film after PET SEMATARY, that would position us terrifically in the marketplace worldwide, domestically as well as internationally."

Sugar unveiled the production at the American Film market in February and was approached by John Ferraro, head of acquisitions for Paramount, who recognized the advantageous timing of the film's placement in the market and made sure it was Paramount who would be capitalizing on Paramount's success.

The film was set to wrap a difficult seven-week schedule on July 31 in order to meet its Halloween release date. Said Sugar, "Singleton is the king of quick filming and good production scheduling." You could say he even wrote the book on it—*Film Scheduling* is one of Singleton's most popular how-to texts. □



Stephen King's

It

Four-hour King miniseries airs November.

By Gary L. Wood

IT lives under the streets of the small town. IT knows your deepest fears. IT waits. IT kills.

After years of stops and starts, Stephen King's IT finally debuts on the small screen in the form of a four-hour miniseries on ABC in November. The quest to bring IT to the screen is a story worthy of King's epic, sprawling novel of unspeakable horror, his longest (not counting the new edition of *The Stand*), weighing in at 1138 pages. It was also one of King's more popular and well-received books, combining the horror elements that have made him a household name with the characterization that made *STAND BY ME* (based on King's story "The Body") so endearing to film audiences.

IT details the trials of seven teenagers who square off against an unnamable creature that can sense their innermost fears and manipulate them to bring about death and destruction. IT gains strength from their hate, frustration and death. The story comes to a head when the group returns as adults to the small town in which they grew up to face the childhood terror that they presumed was dead. Ultimately, they must destroy the evil that lies within each of them.

The cast of characters includes John Ritter (*PROBLEM CHILD*), Tim Reid (*FRANK'S PLACE*), Richard Thomas (yes, John-Boy from *THE WALTONS*), Annette O'Toole (*SUPERMAN III*,



Annette O'Toole, John Ritter, Tim Reid, Harry Anderson (l to r) and Dennis Christopher (seated front) star as childhood friends facing an unspeakable horror (Tim Curry, lurking).

CAT PEOPLE), and Harry Anderson (TV's *NIGHT COURT*).

ABC and producer Lorimar Telepictures originally announced IT as a seven-hour miniseries, with genre icon George A. Romero directing. Romero was forced to bow out due to a scheduling conflict with his own production of the new *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD*, replaced by Tommy Lee Wallace (*FRIGHT NIGHT 2*). The loss of the King project was frustrating for Romero, echoing the circumstances that saw him bumped as director of *PET SEMATARY*.

But Romero, who is currently vying for the rights to film King's *The Dark Half*, said he was much more than just being considered for IT's directing assignment. "I was involved!" he said. "I put in a hell of a lot of time. It's like *PET SEMATARY*, revisited.

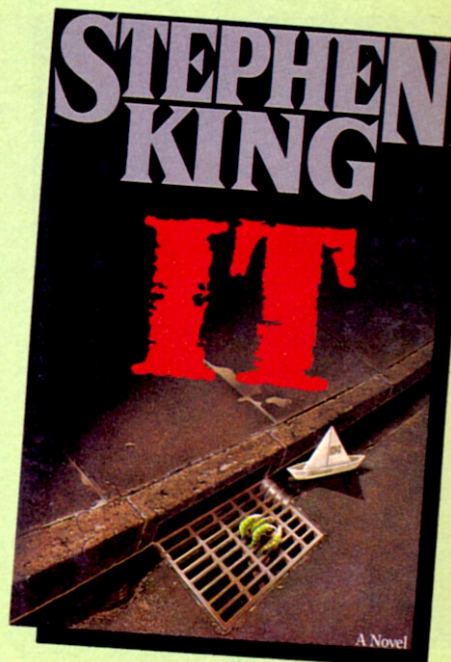
I worked with the effects guys. I did [story] boards. I must have thousands of pages of scripts and notes." Romero had worked closely with writer Lawrence Cohen (*CARRIE*) in preparing the script for the miniseries in both six and four-hour versions. Said Romero, "Larry did a really heroic job of cutting it down."

Cohen hadn't written for television before but said he preferred adapting IT to the miniseries format rather than as a feature film. "I am a big fan of the potential of the miniseries," he said. "It is akin to reading a novel. They allow that luxury of settling into a big chair, and watching that experience."

After being an integral part of the start of the whole Stephen King phenomenon with his screenplay for *CARRIE*—King has stated, "*CARRIE*, the movie, made the book and the book made me"—Cohen

has come full circle with IT. Said Cohen, "Part of my interest in IT, and my pleasure in it, is that Steve has an uncanny gift for writing about kids. *CARRIE* had extraordinarily specific teenagers and adolescents that he wrote about incredibly well. The same is true about IT. He has a gift for creating what childhood and adolescence are like, not really recreating it. There's no buffer or filter between his ability to be that and really remember what it was like to be a kid. I think part of my interest in IT, like *CARRIE*, is that I don't know anybody who's writing about kids that well."

In structuring King's work for television, Cohen said he eschewed the novel's frequent flashbacks to tell a more linear story: the first night introduces



the cast as kids, the second night sees them return as adults. "It's become kind of a different piece," said Cohen. "It's less back-and-forth, yet I think it sort of neatly does what Steve did."

When Wallace came on board as director, his first item of business was to read Cohen's script. "I really loved Larry's structuring of the teleplay," said Wallace. "As you know, most television movies, two-hour movies, are divided into seven acts. It's probably no secret that they have to be divided that way, not for dramatic reasons, but for commercial reasons. This is the first seven-acter—night number one—which is valid dramatically. There are seven characters and each character gets an act in which his or her story is told. And it all comes together in the end with a hook leading you to night number two. It was just a brilliant piece of craftsmanship."

Wallace began his film career as an art director, working beside his childhood buddy John Carpenter, on ASSAULT ON PRECINCT 13 and then as both production designer and editor on HALLOWEEN and THE FOG. He went on to direct his first film for Carpenter, HALLOWEEN III: SEASON OF THE WITCH, and his work in series TV includes THE TWILIGHT ZONE and

Dennis Christopher as Eddie, once the sickly kid of the group, discovers the horror of IT still haunts his hometown.



STEPHEN "BLOODY" KING

"People who don't know very much about horror think they know what Stephen King is all about," said director Tommy Lee Wallace. "I say 'Read, learn he's about a lot more!'"



Tim Reid as Mike Hanlon and Richard Thomas as Bill Denbrough, the stutterer, childhood friends singled out for being different, now facing the horror of the past.

MAX HEADROOM.

Despite his praise for Cohen's script, Wallace felt "very strongly" that a rewrite was needed. "When I first read Larry's script, I had not read the book," said Wallace. "When I heard I might be on the project, I decided not to read the book until after I had read the screenplay so I could be objective about its shortcomings. I knew I was dealing with people who had been intimately involved with the book for years. I pointed out a lot of things I wanted to address in a rewrite."

Though Wallace wanted Cohen to make the changes, the work would have meant a three-week trip for the screenwriter to the film's Vancouver, Canada production base, which his schedule wouldn't permit. So Wallace did the rewriting. "Many of the shortcomings that I pointed out in the screenplay were answered and solved by the book," said Wallace. "One of the things I believe I contributed in my rewrite was just packing in as much of what was memorable about the book. Cohen's version departed drastically in the second part and I just tried to pull it back to be more faithful. I restructured and added more flashbacks. I

tried to maintain some of the rhythm that I felt Cohen established in part one."

Wallace admitted that bringing King's book to the screen in all its visceral power is impossible on television. "You can imagine that Standards and Practices doesn't want to see a bathtub full of blood," said Wallace. "They want to go light on the gore and rotting flesh, those kinds of things. But in terms of children being in mortal jeopardy, they've been very supportive of the way it's told. After seeing dailies, they've come to have some confidence in the filmmakers."

But Wallace said he saw a

reason to go soft for TV audiences. "My sensitivity to Standards and Practices has changed since I now have two daughters, two and seven," he said. "I'm kind of supportive of the idea that free TV can't just put anything on the air, since you can just turn it on, even if you're two years old. I've had very little conflict with what they've asked for."

While Wallace was passionate about not wanting to disappoint King's fans, he was also realistic about adapting a writer who works on such a broad canvas. "Anybody who thinks they can take a thousand page novel and turn it into a complete telling in four—actually three something—hours on commercial television is out of their mind," he said. "The expectations have to be tailored, to some degree, to the medium. On the other hand, I think it's a very successful telling of the story."

"I didn't find the book a gory book at all. He didn't dwell on body parts. To me, what he dwelt on were horrifying, fascinating bits of surrealism that were incredible. People who don't know very much about horror—and that word has really kind of lost its meaning—people who don't follow it very closely, think they know what Stephen King is all about. To them I just say, 'Read! Read and learn for yourself that it's about a lot more!' He's obviously a writer who is fascinated with fear and the dark side of human nature. So was Edgar Allen Poe. King is very emotional, and so much of what he's up to is really wonderful stuff from the heart that really touches me." □

A victim of King's unspeakable horror, taxing the graphic limits of television.



Stephen King's **Misery**

King's best-seller tops it off in December.

By Gary Wood

Once Stephen King read William Goldman's script for the film adaptation of King's best-selling novel *Misery*, knowing that Rob Reiner (*STAND BY ME*) would be directing, he said, "This can't miss!" Goldman has written such films as *BUTCH CASSIDY AND THE SUNDANCE KID*, *THE STEPFORD WIVES*, *ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN*, *MARATHON MAN*, *MAGIC*, and Reiner's *THE PRINCESS BRIDE*. Columbia Pictures opens *MISERY* nationwide in December.

Goldman himself makes no such prediction. "I've heard from people out there that it's one of the hot movies for Christmas, but that means nothing," said the savvy screenwriter and author of *Adventures in the Screen Trade*. "It may be a flop. It may be bigger than *BATMAN*. Nobody has the least fucking idea. That's the thing about the movie industry."

Goldman's involvement with the project began when he was asked by Reiner to consider the script assignment by reading King's book. "I thought it was just a wonderful novel, a wonderful novel," he said. "I was immediately transfixed with wanting to do it." Goldman said Reiner worked with him closely on the script. "He gets you in a room and you go over it literally comma by comma," said Goldman. "For the most part Reiner is precise. In a way, he's like Billy Wilder used to be." Goldman added that he



Tony Award-winning stage actress Cathy Bates as the psychotic Annie Wilkes, holding hostage James Caan as successful writer Paul Sheldon in Rob Reiner's Christmas horror.

succeeded nine other writers Reiner brought in work on the script.

King's novel is the story of Paul Sheldon, a successful book writer trapped doing the romance novels expected of him, who longs to break into "serious" fiction. A car crash in Colorado places him in the care of Anne Wilkes, a retired nurse—and his number one fan—in her remote farm house. Anne is a psychotic who holds Paul hostage, in an attempt to force him to write a comeback for his romantic heroine *Misery*, after he has killed her off in his final romantic novel.

Goldman said he sympathized with the character of Sheldon as well as the autobiographical parallels to King himself. "He's the most popular writer in the world, probably," said Goldman. "And I think it must be very hard. He's like the most beautiful woman in the world, and somebody's

saying to do something different. You know, 'Don't be Garbo. Be something else.' Well, if you've gotten famous being Garbo, why should you change? Especially when he's endlessly prolific."

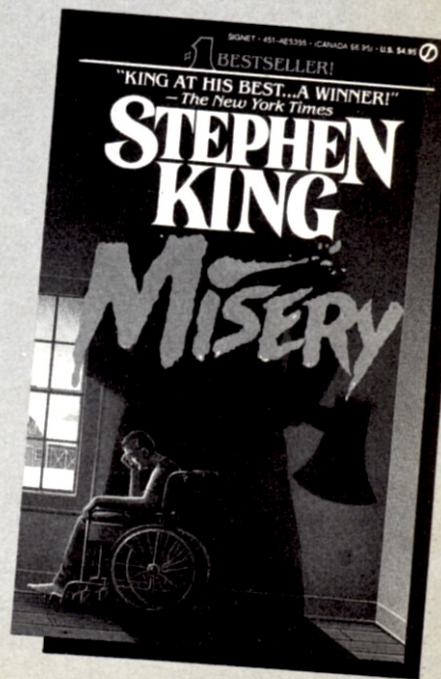
In addition to a top flight director and screenwriter, *MISERY* also has a wonderful cast. James Caan (*THE GODFATHER*, *ALIEN NATION*) was cast as Sheldon when Warren Beatty, who had shown great interest in the role, declined. Richard Farnsworth (*THE GRAY FOX*, *THE NATURAL*) plays Buster, a snooping police officer used by Goldman to open up King's housebound action, and Frances Sternhagen (*OUTLAND*) appears as the officer's wife. Screen legend Lauren Bacall plays Sheldon's agent. And finally, Tony-award-winning stage actress Cathy Bates is Annie Wilkes.

"I wrote *MISERY* for Cathy

Bates," said Goldman, not knowing whether Bates would get the role or not. "I always prayed we'd get her. It's a great part. And I believe this is true. I think an awful lot of actresses wanted to play the part. I was told that was true."

It was Goldman and Reiner's handling of Annie's behavior that prompted Reiner to say in the *Los Angeles Times*, "We got rid of most of the gory horrific parts," something that has King fans worried. "I think that's true," said Goldman. "But I think it's going to be scary as shit!" Goldman said he felt much of the violence in the novel was pointless. "She's all ready bashed him. She's made him a drug addict. There's this thing with King where he's so gifted that I

continued on page 61



CHILD'S PLAY

An on-the-set report, pulling Chucky's puppet

By Kyle Counts

"Open wide, Alex—open nice and wide. And . . . stuff it! A beautiful stuff job. Keep it in there, Alex. Bite that sock!"

Eight-year-old Alex Vincent wasn't particularly fond of filming this scene in *CHILD'S PLAY 2*, which called for him to be awakened in his bedroom by Chucky, everyone's favorite devil doll, who has tied him up with a jump rope in anticipation of transferring his soul into the youngster's body. Director John Lafia can see that Vincent is getting tired, but he's not yet satisfied with the way the scene is working.

"Let's tie him up . . . let's go!" Lafia called out. An assistant once again bound Vincent's arm with the jump rope. Lafia, working closely with director of photography Stefan Czapsky (*VAMPIRE'S KISS*, *FLASHBACK*), planned to open the scene with a tight closeup of Vincent's eyes. The camera will then pull back to reveal Andy (Vincent's character) in bondage, with Chucky kneeling over him on his bed, gloating, as Andy tries to cry out for help, his mouth full of sock.

"Open up, Alex . . . here comes lunch!" cracked Lafia to the delight of the crew, which is sandwiched into the small room that is part of the impressively realistic split-level house created for the \$12 million horror sequel by production designer Ivo Cristante (*TREMORS*). The voice of actor Brad Dourif—who reprises his role in voice form as killer Charles Lee Ray, the spirit inside Chucky—is played back to give the scene the proper Grand Guignol texture.

"I told you we were going to be friends to the end," intoned Ray menacingly. "And now it's time to play. I've got a new game for ya . . . It's called Hide the Soul. And guess what? You're it!" Vincent bites on the sock and struggles valiantly again for the camera, whimpering skillfully as he tries to get free of his restraints. Lafia guided Vincent through a series of reactions, carefully observing it all on a video monitor that is positioned nearby.

Chucky's daddy, effects man Kevin Yagher, coordinated the animatronic puppet's movements with his puppeteers, who are stationed below the set in what is



Christine Elise as Andy's new step-sister, menaced by Chucky in *CHILD'S PLAY 2*, a sequel to the 1988 shocker which Universal Pictures opens nationwide November 9.

called "puppet hell." *CHILD'S PLAY 2* screenwriter Don Mancini stood at the foot of Andy's bed, catching the action on his video camcorder for a "Making of" video planned for cast and crew.

With his ponytail and earring, ankle-length coat and unshaven face, Lafia has the appearance of a renegade director. After the critical lambasting he took for his directorial debut, *THE BLUEIGUANA* (Roger Ebert roasted it, while Leonard Maltin gave it a "Bomb" rating), he knows that *CHILD'S PLAY 2* is an important step in his motion picture career. Lafia co-wrote the script for *CHILD'S PLAY*, sharing credit with Mancini, who wrote the original draft, and director Tom Holland, who wrote the shooting script. Lafia still has hard feelings about being barred from the set of the first film by Holland—along with Mancini—in a squabble over the film's screenplay credits (19:1:27). "I feel that Tom rode on the coattails of what Don and I did," said Lafia.

The story and characters for *CHILD'S*

PLAY were created by Mancini while a student at UCLA. Producer David Kirschner optioned the script, then titled *BATTERIES NOT INCLUDED* (changed for obvious reasons). What Lafia said he missed most from Mancini's original draft was the script's skewering of Madison Avenue. "Tom [Holland] took out all of Don's ideas about advertising—this doll being a social phenomenon like the Cabbage Patch dolls, and Chucky being a form of merchandising revenge. We had a more satirical edge on the corporate world in our draft. We're trying to bring that back to some degree in this film."

You can see the camaraderie that exists between Lafia and Mancini during their interplay on the *CHILD'S PLAY 2* set. Mancini is around both to observe and to handle dialogue alterations when necessary, but mostly he's having fun. Being part of the day-to-day experience of *CHILD'S PLAY 2* is, according to Mancini, "Wonderful. Everyone must think I'm crazy because I'm here every day with my video camera, shooting everything in sight. But, in a way, I guess I'm making up for what I missed the first time around. I'm having the most fun of anyone here because, basically, my work is done." It's not all play, though. "I'd like to direct in the not-too-distant future," said Mancini, who's using his tenure on the set as an education in filmmaking.

In getting started on the sequel, Mancini was fortunate to have the input of Lafia, producer Kirschner and associate producer Laura Moskowitz in shaping the story line. Based on the ideas generated in informal story sessions, Mancini wrote a fifteen-page outline from which he crafted the script in three months, toiling over his computer at home a minimum of five hours a day. He eventually did seven drafts.

The biggest hurdle came in figuring out how to resurrect Chucky from the dead. At first, it was thought that a police forensics expert would reconstruct Chucky to use as evidence; eventually, the forensics expert gave way to a technician at the Play Pals toy factory. The company is anxious to prove that Chucky is nothing but a harmless plastic toy—sales of Good Guy dolls have dropped drastically in the wake of the

2

horror strings.

murders depicted in the first film. The sequel opens with Chucky's reconstruction at the factory lab. As his eyeball is dropped into its socket, a jolt of electricity reanimates the doll and sends a technician flying to his death. Said Mancini of Chucky's rebirth, "It worked in FRANKENSTEIN, and I think it'll work for us."

Mancini has also altered the mythology of the Charles Lee Ray character. "We were all extremely uncomfortable with the voodoo element that Tom Holland added," said Mancini. "Holland added the bit that Chucky was slowly becoming human because he needed that to motivate his third act. We didn't want to carry that idea into the second film, though we give Chucky certain human characteristics—he bleeds, for instance. But his hairline is not going to recede. Our take is that [Ray] has only a certain amount of time to transfer his soul into Alex's body, but we never expect you to believe that Chucky's really going to turn human."

With mom locked away in a padded cell, Andy goes to live at Children's Crisis Center until he is placed in the foster home of Joanne and Phil Simpson (Jenny Agutter and Gerrit Graham), shared with new foster sister Kyle, played by teenage actress Christine Elise (21 JUMP STREET). Once Chucky bumps off Andy's new guardians, he holds the girl hostage at knife point until the final showdown. When asked what she thinks of young co-star Alex Vincent, Elise's response was

The animatronic Chucky, taking a ruler to Andy's school teacher. Inset: Filming the scene, director John Lafia (left) instructs the puppeteers, showing operation of a sophisticated new walking rig (center).

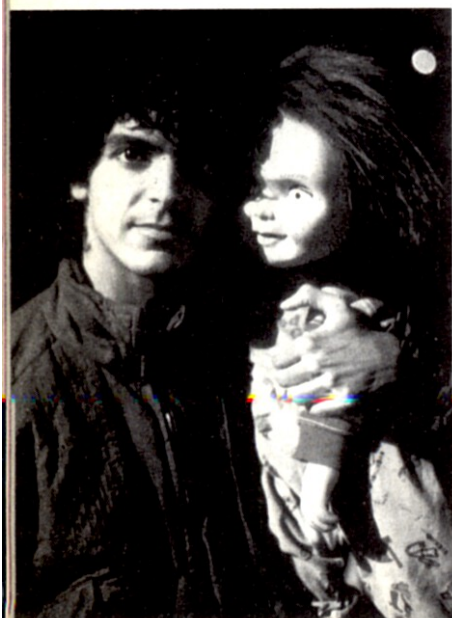


to smile knowingly. "Alex is a little kid who's more like a forty-year-old man," she said. "They had us together for a week for rehearsals before we started shooting. He was uptight at first. He was much more serious and would give answers like an adult. But he's loosened up quite a bit. Now he acts more like a kid. He's very smart, and an incredible stickler for continuity."

Added Agutter, "Obviously, spending a great deal of time around adults has made Alex very precocious. He's very mature in the way that he approaches what he's doing. It's a bit scary when you consider that he's only eight years old. I went to the studio commissary with him one day, and there he was, sitting amidst all these executives talking about agents and his next job. In the next breath he asked if he could show me a magic trick with the tablecloth. There's a mixture of little boy and professional adult."

On the sidelines, as Lafia prepared an insert shot of Elise and Chucky, associate producer Laura Moskowitz watched Kevin Yagher and his crew of puppeteers. Like everyone else on the CHILD'S PLAY 2 set, Moskowitz is astounded by the versatility of the new and improved mechan-

Mancini, who wrote the script for the original while a student at UCLA, having fun on the set with his buddy.



FILMING PUPPET HORROR

"What you hope for in a movie like this is a few key shots to really sell the doll as an entity, as an actor," said associate producer Laura Moskowitz. "You get an audience asking 'How'd they do that?'"



Screenwriter Don Mancini and director John Lafia (right) rehearse a scene on the set.

ical wonder. "In the first film we never felt satisfied in seeing the doll walk, said Moskowitz, who also served as associate producer on the original.

Off-camera, a member of Yagher's crew showed him video footage of the walking Chucky, who is swinging a yardstick (for a scene where he murders Andy's teacher, Mrs. Kettlewell) in a most life-like manner. "What you hope for in a movie like this is a few key shots to really sell the doll as an entity, as an actor," said Moskowitz. "This scene will be one of those because that's the moment when you have the audience going 'How did they do that? Is that a little person or is that a puppet?'"

For CHILD'S PLAY, midget Ed Gale was used in key scenes to supplement the doll's actions, requiring costly sets scaled a third larger. "That was a major expense," recalled Moskowitz. "In this film, we don't have anything oversized at all. In fact, this time around, because Chucky works so well, we've had Ed basically standing by—we really haven't needed him. But you never know when you're going to get into a jam. Ed's on call for certain days

when we think we might need him—even in terms of just using one of his hands for an insert, like opening a briefcase. So he's a major part of the production, just in terms of security."

During a lunch break, Lafia hurriedly consumed a chef salad while he talked about the filming. "I'm a fanatic about preparation," said Lafia, producing as evidence a large black binder containing the script, broken down into weeks by scene numbers. Also bound up were storyboards (for stunt/effects scenes) and set layouts (for planning camera angles). Lafia also said he had miniatures of the sets built out of styrofoam to aid him in staging shots. His shot list was almost as long as the script itself.

The meticulous planning was in keeping with what Lafia said was his approach to the film medium. "I feel strongly that movies should be shot like silent films," he said. "I love a lot of the early silents—especially King Vidor's THE CROWD. I truly believe that you should try to tell your story in images rather than words. The words should be another texture within that—you

shouldn't have to rely on them. I try to show you, rather than tell you, what the story is about. I do a lot of thinking about the camera, and the audience being the camera—whose point of view are we seeing? I've shot an enormous amount of this movie from low angles, which represent both Andy's and Chucky's perspectives. I don't think you've seen as much ceiling in a movie since CITIZEN KANE.

"Also, I'm shooting Chucky in a way that's a lot scarier than the first movie—Tom [Holland] tended to have him in medium closeup all the time. My idea was to treat Chucky like another actor. He's a villain, so we have a lot of low angles on him, a lot of wide angles and quick dolly-ins, shadowy lighting. It's just how I would make a human being look sinister. I watched GREMLINS and other films that used puppets, and to a large degree their shots are kind of flat and dead-on. My style is more like Sam Raimi's."

Not only is Chucky a better-built monster, he'll be more menacing this time around as well, asserted Lafia. "He does a lot more in this film—he's in more scenes, and he does a lot more things, physically. He talks less, too. The more he talks, the less scary he seems to become. I love the voodoo doll segment in TRILOGY OF TERROR with Karen Black—that was the best doll movie ever made. The doll just made noises, and he was scarier than hell somehow."

Finally, there's the question of a CHILD'S PLAY 3. Will Lafia attempt another series outing? "That depends on two things: if Don's script is brilliant enough, and how this one does at the boxoffice."

Mancini said he considered it a responsibility to wrap up the CHILD'S PLAY series. "My feeling is, they're going to do Part 3 with me or without me. It would bother me to know that someone else was writing it. I look at the CHILD'S PLAY films as a trilogy; there's another story yet to be told, and I have the basics for that already in mind." □

INSIDE CHUCKY

Makeup effects expert Kevin Yagher created the movie's puppet star.

By Kyle Counts

For Kevin Yagher's money, *CHILD'S PLAY 2* contains some of his best work. The creator of Chucky for the original, Yagher admitted that the horror series has benefited him greatly in terms of increased exposure, better billing in other films and—last but not least—his recent marriage to *CHILD'S PLAY* star Catherine Hicks. When asked how he came to be associated with the sequel, Yagher impishly wiggled his eyebrows and said, "I have the doll!"

Yagher's makeup truck, parked on the Universal Studios lot, is littered with hanging Chucky dolls, both rod and foam versions (each is labeled according to its function: "biting doll," "flailing doll," etc.), replacement skins and two interchangeable closeup Chucky heads.

Among Yagher's many chal-

lenges in *CHILD'S PLAY 2* was to make a better, more advanced doll on a smaller budget. "They [the producers] wanted to keep the cost of the doll down," he said. "And it really wouldn't have been fair to charge them for the design and construction of a new doll. I had to explain to [executive producer] David [Kirschner] that the doll took a tremendous amount of abuse in the first film and was quite gunked up. Plus, the skins were all ruined from corrosion and the metal parts had begun to oxidize. We basically had to take Chucky apart and put him back together. We strengthened him, plus we added full cable legs so we could get a good walk. Last time, we ended up cutting out the walking shot."

The new walking rig—made of aluminum and weighing in at 45 pounds—fits around the puppeteer "like the Power Loader in *ALIENS*; it hangs



Eight-year-old Alex Vincent as Andy, held hostage by Yagher's animatronic actor. Below: Chucky practices his phonetics. Yagher's puppeteers lip-synched the doll's dialogue scenes to slowed-down audio tracks for more realistic lip movements.



on his shoulders. He steps inside and holds the handles, and the puppet mimics his movements. He has to take baby steps to mimic Chucky's walk."

Chucky's face, said Yagher, "is more animated—we have four different faces with a neutral expression and one smiling face with a wicked smile and a mean brow, which was pre-set in the sculpture design."

Having Brad Dourif's voice to use on playback has made it possible for Yagher's puppeteers—F. Charles Lutkus, Brock Winkless, Kevin Carlson, Tony Rupperecht, Mecki Heussen, Ron Pipes, Van Snowden, Michael Trcic, Shannon Shea—to coax a more convincing performance out of Chucky. "Last time, we prerecorded Chucky's dialogue using [director] Tom Holland's voice," explained Yagher. "This time around, we got smart. We prerecorded Chucky's voice tracks in advance using Brad Dourif, and we slowed everything down on the voiceover [from 24 frames per second] to 18 frames per second, which makes it sound like a 45 record at 33 1/3.

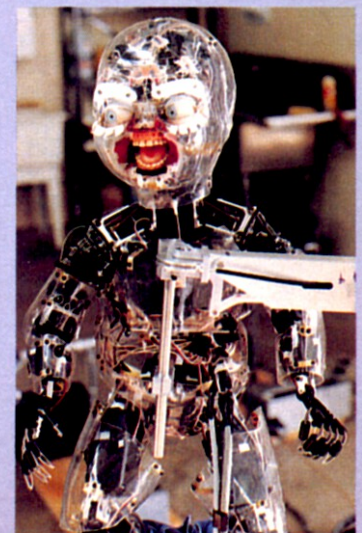
"On set, it gives the facial

guys a chance to hit their mark at times when the action is so quick that the puppeteer can't get to it—o's, p's and t's, stuff where his lips come together—or when Chucky's brow has to come down and go back up."

There have been no time delays caused by mechanical problems with Chucky, Yagher insisted. "We had a month of rehearsal, with no down time.

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The visible Chucky, a look at the mechanics of one of the radio-operated puppets built for *CHILD'S PLAY*.



Yagher and his animatronic brain child, directing the second unit effects work.



NIGHT OF THE

Remaking George Romero's horror classic

By Michael Frasher

To find the production office of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD in Washington, Pennsylvania you have to pass the boarded-up movie theatre at the intersection of Main Street. The theatre was still playing first-run films when the original movie was made here in 1967. Now, like every other place in America, Washington has a multiplex at the mall, and single screen houses are closed.

The production office is a huge turn-of-the-century Victorian stone building that looks like it was made for a horror film. It even has a ghost, according to the secretary. The film crew remaking George Romero's horror classic was found a half hour's drive away through rural Hope-well Township, at a spooky-looking church and cemetery on a windswept hilltop. This is where the cast and crew have stopped to eat their lunch.

The new NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD is being produced by John A. Russo and Russell Streiner, two veterans of Romero's original. Russo wrote the earlier film with Romero, and Streiner co-produced it and played one of its leads. Romero wrote the script for the remake and served as executive producer with Menahem Golan, whose 21st Century Film Corporation backed the production. Romero pegged effects protegee Tom Savini to direct the remake, which Columbia Pictures opens nationwide at Halloween. The filmmakers form a friendly, close, tight-knit group, which runs the production like it was a family business.

Streiner and Russo have been working together for so long they sometimes finish each other's sentences without



Romero (left) and co-producers Russell Streiner and John A. Russo (right), with a ghoul extra, a family reunion on many of the same Pennsylvania locations used for the first film.

interrupting or missing a beat. Working with them is Richard Ricci, another veteran, of sorts, of the original. Ricci was among the ten investors who made up Image Ten, the company Romero formed to make the original.

"In the beginning, I was directing the movie and playing the lead," said Ricci of his involvement on the first NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. "Things were pretty disorganized at that time. There were a lot of disagreements over everything. I had other things to do, so I left. I guess the rest is history."

Ricci drew a blank when asked if he felt like The Beatles' first drummer—uh, what's his name? "Well, I don't know about that," said Ricci. "But it's great to be back. I suppose the moral is 'Don't leave town.'"

Like Ricci, both Streiner and Russo said they feel good to be back in Living Dead country, redoing the same film they made 23 years ago. "I expected the experience to be heavy with *deja vu*, but it hasn't been that way," said Streiner. "A lot has changed

and a lot of time has passed."

Added Russo, "Like Russ, I expected *deja vu* to set in, but it doesn't. The first time we used eight zombies and tried to create the appearance of a crowd. This time we have over 100 zombies. We're spending more money in one day than it cost to make the original."

The original film was made for just over \$100,000. The 21st Century remake is budgeted at \$4.2 million. Like the first film the cast features a roster of newcomers and relative unknowns. Tony Todd is

cast as Ben, the black hero played by the late Duane Jones in the original. Todd is best known for his role as K'Urn, Worf's brother on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION.

Pat Tallman, a veteran of Romero's KNIGHTRIDERS (1981) and MONKEY SHINES (1988), got the role of Barbara, the female lead played originally by Judith O'Dea. McKee Anderson plays Helen Cooper, the mother whose injured daughter dies in the farmhouse and turns into a ghoul. Cast as her argumentative husband Harry Cooper is Tom Towles, the Chicago actor known for his

role in HENRY: PORTRAIT OF A SERIAL KILLER. Karl Hardman originated the role as well as co-produced the first film. Bill Moseley, Chop Top in THE TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE—PART 3, plays Johnny, Barbara's brother who becomes the ghouls' first victim as the film opens, played by co-producer Russ Streiner in the original. The young lovers who complete the cast of characters that take refuge from the ghouls in the beleaguered farmhouse are played by William Butler and Katie

Tony Todd as the film's heroic lead, played in the original by the late Duane Jones, fends off attacking ghoul Walter Berry, breaking into the beleaguered farmhouse.



LIVING DEAD

in living color, a Pittsburgh family affair.

Finneran.

The original fueled the early stages of the continuing debate about graphic cinematic gore. The filmmakers were eager to dispel any idea that the new film might attempt to exploit that heritage. "We aren't trying to make a gory horror film," said Streiner. "We're not trying to outdo the films that followed the original."

That's because the filmmakers are contractually obligated to deliver an R-rated film for Columbia's broad nationwide release strategy at Halloween. To do that Savini was said to be following a "less is more" approach, letting the audience's imagination complete the action at strategic moments. Some deaths occur off camera, heard but not seen, and zombies will sometimes be glimpsed only for an instant.

"This film is not simply a remake," said Streiner. "That's why we've preserved some mystery about the plot. Remaking the original, just replicating it, even if we wanted to, would be impossible. Filmmaking techniques and special effects have changed beyond recognition in the intervening years. It has to be a different film."

Russo pointed out that films have often been remade in the past, sometimes with better results, citing *A FAREWELL TO ARMS* and *THE FRONT PAGE* as two examples. "I don't think anyone, including Savini, has felt restricted by the original," said Russo. "If you have a good solid story and you use some imagination, the remake will stand up and have an identity of its own."

Added Streiner, "The story will be different because Tom has a special effects background and will inevitably retell the story in his own way. No one expects him to simply mimic the first film."

One gets the feeling from lis-



Johnnie (Bill Moseley) protects sister Barbara (Pat Tallman) from attacking ghoul Greg Funk, restaging the original film's cemetery opening for a new audience. Columbia Pictures releases the remake nationwide for Halloween on October 19.

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

ZOMBIE DIRECTOR TOM SAVINI

Makeup's guru of gore turns director and backs away from his bloody reputation.

By Michael Frasher

On location, at a farmhouse just outside Washington, Pennsylvania, makeup effects expert Tom Savini confided that it was easier just doing effects than making his feature directing debut on the remake of George Romero's **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**. "And I made just about as much money," he said.

But Savini said he had no regrets about taking on his first feature. And he certainly came prepared for the task. Besides being one of the top makeup effects practitioners in the business, Savini has been an actor in both stage and film productions, is a certified stunt supervisor, and has directed segments of Romero's TV series **TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE**.

For some, Romero's **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** held a message that reflected the turbulent politics of the late '60s. In the vastly different, more conservative political climate of the '90s, Savini said he is steering clear of such connotations. "Politically, we didn't set out to convey any particular message," said Savini. "It's not a political film. I'm sure some people will see a subtext. There's already been some discussion about the film as a metaphor for AIDS, but that's not what we set out to do. This is a film about people facing an external threat. In a way, the threat—zombies or AIDS—doesn't matter. It's the people and their response that matters. If the people in this house can pull together they can save themselves—if they can't, they'll die. That's not unlike what we all have to do. If there's a message, that's it."



Director Savini.

Savini said he intends to make **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** a truly frightening film, not just another cartoon splatter fest. To do that Savini acknowledged he must still satisfy audiences who have been exposed to even greater amounts of increasingly sophisticated special effects and graphic gore. "No doubt about it," said Savini, "it's more of a challenge today to frighten film audiences. Before effects became elaborate, a mere skeleton was

scary. When I was a young boy, a skull was a scary thing. Today, a skull is nothing. Effects guys like me spoiled people. The more we showed them, the more they wanted to see. We were put in a position of trying to outdo ourselves."

Indeed, a legion of horror films short on fright have resorted to simply shocking audiences by upping the ante on graphic gore. Considering the well-deserved gory reputation of Romero's "Dead Trilogy," can Savini avoid using the remake to crank up the gore quotient another notch? "We're not trying to do that," he said. "I'm

Manning the barricades with Tallman, Katie Finneran as Judy Rose and William Butler as Tom, the teenagers among those besieged in the deserted farmhouse.



Stacy Foster as the film's "Doll's Mom Zombie," makeup by Everett Burrell and John Vulich.

known as the King of Splatter, but ironically, this is not a splatter film. With my name on it and George's name on it, I know people are going to expect some of that, and in some ways they won't be disappointed, but these days, you're not going to frighten audiences with more gore."

The original **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** sparked a continuing debate about the level of graphic gore and violence in films. More than a few critics have linked cinematic violence to the rising tide of real violence, and have called for restrictions. Savini himself has even been quoted as saying some films have gone too far, "gotten out of hand." In talking about the gruesome work he is known for, the King of Splatter sounded a trifle ashamed.

"When I was an effects supervisor, I didn't write the stuff, it was just my job to create the effects as realistically as possible," said Savini. "I never thought of them as grisly until I'd see that people were grossed out by effects I'd had fun creating. I would say, 'What have we done?' Now, I think we're seeing a movement away from that."

As if to set the record straight Savini added, "Personally, I'm not a gore hound. In some ways, I became a captive of my own success. I'm grateful that background has given me a chance to direct. Everyone starts somewhere. But, as a director I have aspirations that go beyond gore and splatter. Eventually, I want to do an action adventure film." □

tening to Russo and Streiner that while both have gone on to other accomplishments over the years—Russo has authored thirteen novels and directed two films, and Streiner also has a directing credit and runs his own production company—they have never really put the success of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD behind them. The same could be said of Romero, who has gone on record with his frustration at being stuck in the horror field.

“Russ and I are two of the trustees of the corporation that has the rights to the original,” said Russo, when asked whether he and Streiner get the feeling they’ve never left. “We’ve lived with the film for all of these years. Creatively, we’ve done other things, but from a business standpoint the original has been a continuing enterprise. We’ve worked on licensing arrangements for posters, trading cards, comic books and masks, and unfortunately we’ve fought the legal battles over revenues and copyrights.”

In a family business somebody has to get stuck minding the store. Streiner smiled at the analogy. “The first film was definitely a family affair,” he said. “As a result, a lot of good energy went into the original. Despite the passage of time and the differences, I have that same feeling about this film. I know the veterans feel great about being here, and the new people are very pleased to be working on the remake of a classic. Even though this is a lot bigger production, the level of commitment is very similar to what existed on the original.”

From a ridge-top vantage point rows of hills stretch westward toward the Ohio River.

To the east, a narrow valley cradles a Grandma Moses vignette of 18th century Americana. A large white farmhouse glows in the warm, dusky light of a spring evening. A closer look reveals something unusual about the picture-book scene. The house’s windows and doors are shrouded

SAVINI ON DIRECTING

“It’s more of a challenge today to frighten film audiences. Effects guys like me spoiled people. The more we showed them, the more they wanted to see. Now we’re trying to outdo ourselves.”



Lunch break: Savini restages a memorable moment from the original as the zombies are shown feasting on the newly dead. Hundreds of ghoul extras got recruited on location.

with huge black tarpaulins which shut out the fading light. The yard is crisscrossed with cables. In the driveway, a generator hums quietly, and the farmyard is filled with trucks, vans and the other logistical paraphernalia characteristic of a major film production. Like the farmhouse, this scene too is a vignette of Americana, but the painter here is not Grandma Moses—it is George Romero. The farmhouse is one of two primary locations used for Savini’s remake of Romero’s NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD.

Romero has been quoted, in the *Wall Street Journal* no less, on the *raison d’être* behind his return to Living Dead country. “From my standpoint, this [remake] is purely financial,” he said. Such a motivation doesn’t sound like a promising start for a creative effort, but perhaps it’s not as bad as it sounds. Romero and his partners received little of the substantial revenues generated by the original NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. Inadvertent loss of copyright protection made the film fair

game, and cost the filmmaker uncounted royalties.

Other commitments have made Romero an infrequent visitor to the set. Our requests for an interview over a seven-week period were declined, ostensibly because Romero was busy on a script assignment. It could be he just doesn’t want to talk about NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. Or it could be Romero doesn’t want to steal the limelight from his directing protegee, Savini.

Savini was just starting in the effects business when Romero was getting the original film underway. Savini applied for an effects job on the first film but a commitment to the U.S. Army kept him off the production. Beginning with Romero’s MARTIN in 1978, the two have a long working relationship which includes parts two and three of Romero’s “Dead” trilogy: DAWN OF THE DEAD (1979) and DAY OF THE DEAD (1985).

Across the farmyard a stocky, black-haired man sipped coffee and walked slowly toward the house. He looked like a

linebacker. This was Savini. It seemed improbable that this leisurely stroller was a man directing his first feature film on a tight schedule. Savini was calm, relaxed and unhurried as he stopped to talk while his crew set up a shot in the house.

Savini’s first directing assignment was an episode of Romero’s TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE television series. He assumed a faraway look as he mused about how it feels to be directing his first feature. “Over twenty years ago, fresh out of high school, just a kid, I went to see George about doing the make-up work on the original,” he said. “Now, I’m directing the remake. When I have a rare quiet moment on the set I look around and it dawns on me that I’ve come a long way to reach this point.”

Savini declined to discuss the plot specifics of his remake in hopes of springing a few surprises on his audience. “Inevitably, the plots are similar in some ways, and in the beginning, fans of the original may begin to feel comfortable with the remake,” he said. “In fact, we’re counting on people knowing the first film, and we’re trying to use that fact to our advantage. Just about the time they feel comfortable, this film will twist and turn, surprise them, and catch them off guard. People won’t be able to predict what’s coming next, and I think that will make this film a much more frightening experience than a straight remake.”

Savini predicted his version will be “a lot more intense” than the original. But plot twists aside, a lot of zombies have stumbled down the cinematic road since the Living Dead first terrorized the Pennsylvania countryside two decades ago. Can zombies still frighten horror audiences who have seen it all and then some?

“I think zombies can still be scary,” he said. “It’s true, there have been lots of zombies in twenty years, from George’s other films to Michael Jackson’s THRILLER, and on and on. People have seen zombies

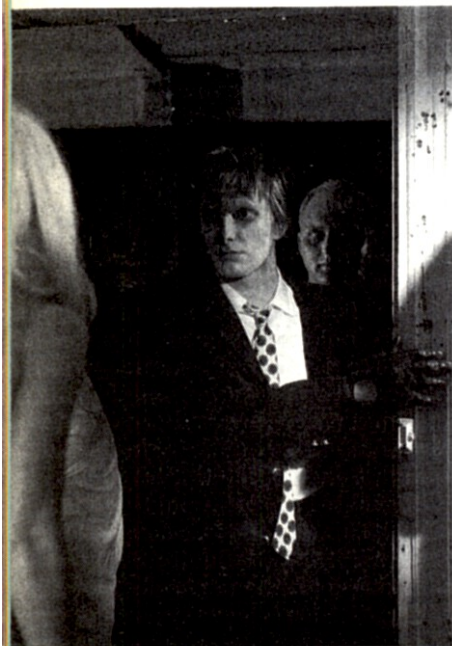
and more zombies, so we knew if the zombies were going to be frightening, we had to do some things differently."

Savini has tried to avoid the zombie label. When production began, he banned the use of the word, preferring to call his walking cadavers "dead things" instead. But after the first week or two of production the old "Z" word just crept back in. Said Savini, "I wanted to call them 'dead things,' because to me, zombies are voodoo and Haiti and not that scary anymore, and the zombies are not what this story is about."

Savini distilled the difference in his approach to the subject in one word, *realism*. "Zombies have become stylized and cartoonish," said Savini. "I want our zombies to look natural, like cadavers, because death is natural, not surreal and theatrical." In search of realism, the film's effects team, John Vulich and Everett Burrell, went to morgues, observed autopsies, and studied cadavers.

"People die from lots of causes," Savini observed, "so not all corpses look alike. If I could, I would have used mechanized cadavers. That's the look I wanted. But of course I couldn't do that." Of course not. We've all seen actors who performed as if they were dead, but dead

Co-producer Russ Streiner as O'Dea's brother Johnnie, back from the dead. Streiner co-produced the new remake.



NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

THE ORIGINAL

An autopsy report on the unique attraction and perennial popularity of Romero's classic.

By Thomas Doherty

Amidst the assassinations, escalations, elections, and other sordid and assorted excesses of 1968, George Romero's *NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD* fit right in. For hallucinatory dislocation and wide-awake terror, the resurrection of one of mankind's oldest horrors—that the Dead Shall Walk the Earth—injected a potent dose of old-style retrogression into an age of new-fangled revolution. Afraid of cops, nars, the draft? Don't trust anyone over thirty? Hey, don't trust anyone *underground*.

An independent production from Pittsburgh, previously renowned only for steel mills and punch lines, NLD immediately seized the *zeitgeist* by the throat. It built a small following, hit the midnight circuit and achieved cult status, and eventually joined a select waxworks of films whose names alone unspool their images. Familiarity has yet to breed contempt; it can still unnerve on the fifth viewing. Any autopsy on the nature of its unique attraction, perennial popularity, and widespread influence is bound to produce an inconclusive pathology report. The appeal of this film, like all great art, lies irretrievably in the remote crevices of the unconscious, not in the measurable units of flesh and blood. But being as the patients are dead anyway, the following dissection can do no harm.

Some elements were pio-



Romero shoots heroine Judy O'Dea's headlong rush from the graveyard. Romero served as the film's writer, cameraman, director and editor.

neered by NLD; others it brought to a new awful level of morbid fascination. Together they help account for the remarkable endurance and wide-ranging influence of an American nightmare.

The Human Race: NLD is immediately striking not because it features a black protagonist but because not once in the film is his race ever alluded to. No joshing reference, no slur, no on-screen recognition of a fact that the color-sensitive American audience would initially and intermittently have uppermost in its mind. As Stuart Samuels in his cult movie chronical *Midnight Movies* noted, the omission is laced with significance. The spectator is thus forced to acknowledge and confront his own racial awareness—something that seduces him further into the narrative.

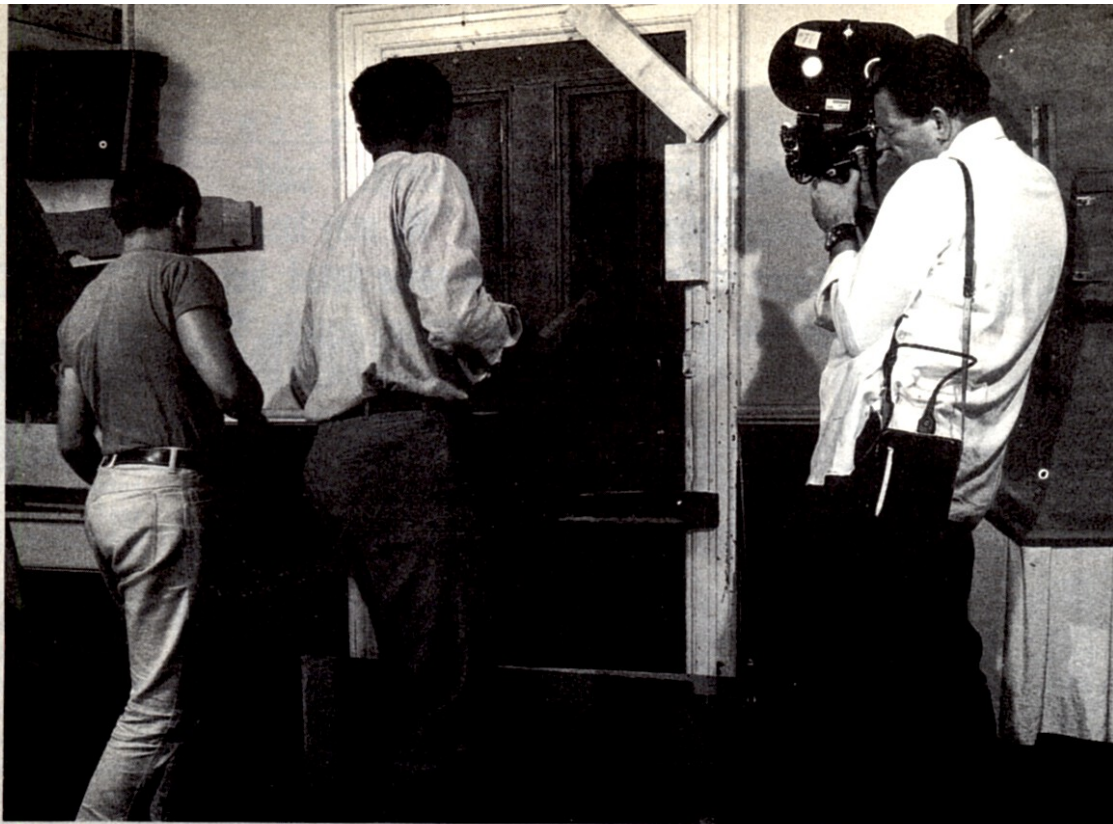
For his part, the black hero is

altruistic, resourceful, confident, and just plain smart. There is an obvious sexual-racial tension between him and the bald (impotent) white husband who argues, rants and raves and retreats to the basement. This man would rather risk communion with the undead than with the un-white.

The stark finale, when the hero is shot by a marauding band of ghoulish hunters, evokes a cavalcade of ugly images from American cinema and racial history—from Griffith's *THE BIRTH OF A NATION* to the flames of a Ku Klux Klan meeting. The funereal pyre and the grim dispatching of the ghouls—a task the hunters take to with good ol' boy

relish—is a re-establishment of a human order that precludes humanity. It is more than an unhappy ending; it's a tragic one. The hunters cannot see the animate soul beneath the black skin. The climax posits no path to human redemption, no possibility that race will not continue to separate the human.

Home Invasion: The great source of this trope is Hitchcock's *THE BIRDS*, a film that, together with *PSYCHO*, seems to have spawned double-handedly the next thirty years of cinematic horror. The American home—a citadel of security, familiarity, and cozy self-satisfaction that was not yet called "cocooning"—becomes a house of horrors. Nowhere, says NLD, can you insulate yourself from the blood-curdling forces of an intrusive and hostile world. As the makeshift homebodies are beset by zombies crashing through windows



Romero films a hand-held take of Keith Wayne as Tom and Duane Jones as Ben, in the farmhouse, awaiting the zombie onslaught.

“The appeal of this film, like all great art, lies irretrievably in the remote crevices of the mind. The horror comes from us, clawing its way out from our collective unconscious.”

pounding on doors, ripping up floorboards—the once sacred castle is now a suffocating, claustrophobic mausoleum, no longer an impregnable fortress, but a death trap. Home is not where the heart is, unless it's the main course. The living room dimension also explains why NLD is one of the few horror films that plays as well on the TV screen as in the theatre. It was made with the home in mind.

At Their Throats: The WWII combat film posited a reassuring myth: that no matter how disparate and ethnically diverse was the motley collection of Americans, common danger would unite them into a fighting force. Brooklyn Jew, Iowa farm boy, patrician Yankee meld together in the face of the enemy. The sensibility was brought full-blown to the horror film in Howard Hawks and Christian Nyby's *THE THING*. Trapped in their Arctic fortress, the military unit binds together to ward off and juice up the alien vegetable besieging them.

Within the enclosed fortress of NLD, the most excruciating reality is the constant bickering and disunion of the group. At the very moments when these people, thrown together by immediate and dreadful danger, should be suppressing

their egos and forgetting their prejudices, they are fragmenting to pieces. As ravenous ghouls are literally knocking down the doors, the occupants are at *each other's* throats, pouting, yelling, retreating to the basement. The disintegration of the group vividly reflected a cultural break-up that began in '60s America. From now on, the horror waiting outside the door would be accentuated by the horror of isolation within the four walls.

Problem Child: Traditionally, children are the vessels of innocence and the figures of hope for the future. The delinquency-plagued '50s brought a couple of reversals on the standard theme of childhood innocence in *THE BAD SEED* and *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED*. But again NLD took things a step beyond—here the child literally devours Mom and Dad. In 1968, the crest of the baby boom, the time when the glorification and power of youth would never be

greater, the fierce appetite of pampered and affluent children may have seemed just that all-consuming. Since NLD, children have been fair game as monsters—or rather adults have been fair game for the kiddies.

Raw Guts: A mental journey back through movie time is required to recapture the uniqueness of the boundary-transcending, gruesome special effects in something like NLD. This isn't just a matter of blood and guts (although, God knows, they had impact) but of the frontiers of the imagination. Given his purposes, Romero was blessed by the lingering effects of the old Production Code. Though officially *kaput* and not yet replaced by the current ratings system, the Code was alive in the mass audience mind. Concealment and implication, not exhibition and explicitness, were still the rule. In 1968 audiences had simply never before beheld, say, a ghoul munching on some

really convincing-looking human intestines or a full-frontal nude zombie weaving towards center screen among clothed but oblivious companions. The disorientation and shock (when, gentle viewer, was the last time you were shocked—really freaked—by a scene of violence or grossness at the movies?) imprinted NLD indelibly on the popular mind. The celebrated attack by Roger Ebert—this one is bad for children, he warned in a blistering thumbs down—is not the moral outrage of a censor, but the response of a critic who knew that horror had leaped into a whole new realm of cinematic explicitness and narrative assault. [Note: Ebert has since recanted his damning review.]

Purity of Form: In an age of promiscuous generic cross-breeding—science fiction horror, action horror adventure, science fiction action horror adventure (hell, *CHILD'S PLAY* has a car chase)—NLD retains its integrity as pure horror. When the TV announcer talks about invasive alien rays as the dead's come-hither inspiration, no one is fooled; these creatures come from *us*, clawing their way to daylight from the tombs of our collective unconscious. Sadly, Romero would never again serve up his

continued on page 60

actors, well, that's another story. If nothing else, the Screen Actors Guild might object.

Savini's search for realism will also show up in the film's fight scenes. "When we have a fight, I want the fight to be real," he said. "I want to see impacts. I don't want to pull the punches." Just the kind of thing the actors love to hear.

Helping Savini achieve the "realism" he's after is New York-based director of photography Frank Prinzi. As Savini is called to the set, Prinzi talked about photographing the film on the porch steps of the farmhouse, between set-ups. "From our first meetings Tom was clear about wanting the film to look as natural as possible," said Prinzi. "The special effects are restrained. That adds to the realism of the film, and we wanted to emphasize that. We've used high contrast and a sharp, clean appearance to heighten the reality and the believability of what is basically an unreal situation. We've used a lot of handheld cameras, particularly on the fight scenes, to add to the reality.

"When we go to the zombies we go to somewhat of a fantasy look, but even then we stayed away from very theatrical colors. We don't want the lighting to be unreal or bizarre. We used warm lighting in the house, which is realistic, and represents safety. We didn't try to light every corner. As a result, we may lose some faces in the shadows and we may lose some detail at times, but that's the way the world looks. It's what's in the darkness and the shadows that scares people."

Perhaps the greatest burden of Savini's quest for "realism" on his NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD remake fell on makeup effects supervisors Vulich and Burrell. Savini insisted that they avoid the "zombie clichés." Said Vulich, "We experimented with subtle ways to make the zombies as realistic as possible." The duo concentrated on nuances of facial structure

FILMING THE LIVING DEAD

"We didn't try to light every corner," said cinematographer Frank Prinzi. "We may lose some faces in the shadows and some detail, but it's what's in the darkness that scares people."



Master and pupil: Savini confers with Romero on location in Washington, Pennsylvania.

because they felt small details form the basis for a viewer's perception of image realism.

"Viewers might not even be consciously aware of the details," said Burrell. "But the unconscious mind perceives the details as realistic and that creates an acceptance by the viewer of the image. That perception of realism is carried over to the rest of the film. Once the viewer has accepted the film's reality, you can then introduce some surreal elements."

Added Vulich, "Effects are a lot like film music. If you notice the music, it detracts from the film. If you notice the effects, if they stand out, you've placed the viewers' attention in the wrong place."

Savini said he is pleased with what Burrell and Vulich have come up with. "I wanted a variety of zombie appearances and I wanted realism," said Savini. "John and Everett have done a great job on both counts. Even if audiences are jaded by zombies, I think they'll take notice of these dead things."

Blood coloration and viscos-

ity were other details Vulich and Burrell concentrated on to enhance the film's realistic look. Vulich has an active dislike for the fire engine red blood used so copiously in horror films. "Most horror film blood looks fake," he said. "The audience knows it's fake and they can then dismiss it and laugh at what's happening on the screen. On the other hand, if the blood looks real, it's not funny—it's frightening."

As paramedics, doctors, homicide cops, undertakers, and special effects guys will tell you, fresh blood is red but it turns brown as the hemoglobin begins to oxidize. And, as the blood coagulates, it flows less freely. Vulich and Burrell cooked up four blood and fluid recipes for NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD, fresh red blood, brown coagulating blood, pasty brown blood, and a yellow, oozing fluid associated with aging wounds.

"Basically, this is more of a makeup film than an effects film," said Vulich. Then with a sheepish grin he added, "There is an exploding head, though." The head was fabricated as a

gelatin puppet. Full face latex appliances were used to create the zombie make-ups.

Vulich said he was fully in favor of Savini's subtle, realistic approach to horror, and doesn't miss the challenge of doing flashier, more spectacular effects. "At the risk of biting the hand that feeds me, I have to say I get tired of films relying on special effects to substitute for a story," he said. "Overuse can make special effects look bad. There's not a lot of challenge to simply using effects for the shock value."

Though Savini has been dubbed "The King of Splatter" for his gory effects work on other films, Vulich said he wasn't surprised to see Savini downplay the gore when he turned director. "I'd worked with Tom enough to know he's low key on the gore. Tom realizes that the film will succeed or fail on the story and the characters. For this film to work, people will have to care whether the characters live or die."

During a meal break, before getting back to work, the cast and crew of NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD stopped to sing "Happy Birthday" to effects man Burrell and present him with a cake. As it turned out, it was not an effects cake—it was real—and everyone got to eat a piece.

Only time will tell whether the filmmakers get to eat their cake and have it too—whether they can draw from the original film's heritage without being trapped by the past. In their favor is the fact that this production has a certain sense of genuine continuity. They've all come home to make this film. In the past, Romero has directed while Savini handled effects with assistance from Burrell and Vulich. This time, Romero has stepped aside to give Savini a chance to direct, and Savini has given his former assistants their first feature to effects supervise. There's a certain aura of good karma in evidence. Hell, they let Richard Ricci come back—that's got to be worth something. □

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

THE ZOMBIES FROM HARD DISC HELL

Makeup experts Everett Burrell and John Vulich on designing ghouls by computer.

By Michael Frasher

Bit by bit, a grotesque face materialized before my eyes. Even as I watched, the features began to change. The forehead bulged as if about to explode, the sallow skin turned a cadaverous gray, and a deep wound appeared on a cheek and began to enlarge at a frightening rate. I wasn't witnessing an apparition, I was watching John Vulich operating his Amiga computer.



Vulich (left) and Burrell pose with a zombie design called up on their Amiga computer.

Vulich, with Everett Burrell, runs Optic Nerve, the Los Angeles-based special effects company picked by director Tom Savini to handle the makeup and effects on the new NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD. A tour of Optic Nerve's location workshop evidenced the usual unusual things you see lying around the set of a film like this: a few arms, a torso or two, some miscellaneous wounds and scars and a prop head, complete with a crowbar embedded in its skull. Appearing somewhat incongruous in this workshop setting was the duo's Amiga computer work station.

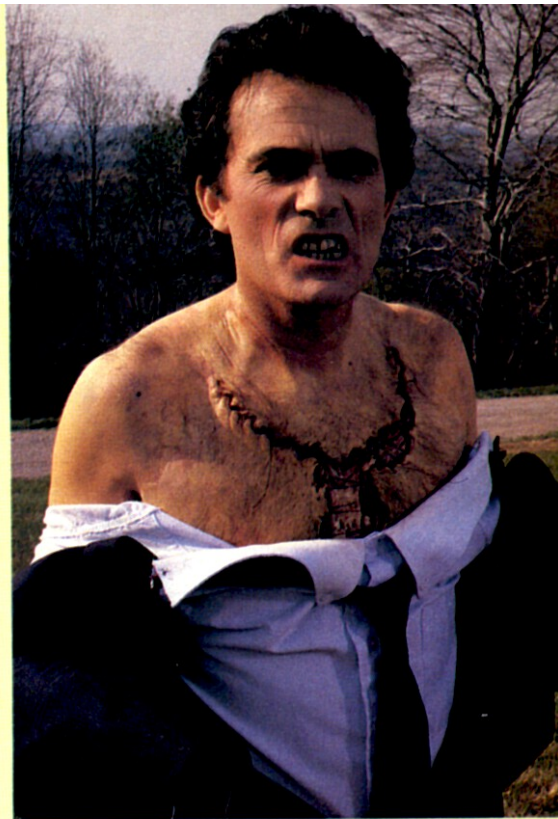
"Basically, we've been using the Amiga for a design and sketch pad," said Vulich. "The computer enables us to generate photographically realistic images and provides a lot of flexibility to experiment with various looks for faces and makeup effects. Changes can be done more quickly than with handmade drawings."

Uncommon now, the use of computers in effects makeup is likely to increase rapidly. The

basic equipment is relatively inexpensive, and the speed with which images can be created and altered provides obvious advantages for filmmakers operating on tight schedules and limited budgets.

"Tom [Savini] had identified some basic looks he was interested in," said Vulich. "Everett and I arrived in Pennsylvania and began to work with Tom about two months before principal photography began. We looked at a lot of photographs of faces. Mainly, we were looking at photographs of people with very horrible conditions involving disease or trauma. As distasteful as it sounds, we even looked at photos of concentration camp inmates, because they were as close as a person comes to the living dead. We finally selected a number of photos that had some aspect of the appearances we were interested in."

Those photographs were shot with a video camera, the video images were dig-



The Autopsy Ghoul (Tim Carrier), makeup by Vulich and Burrell's L.A.-based Optic Nerve company.

itized, and that information stored in the Amiga. A painting and drawing program is used to manipulate and alter the images. All of the hardware and software is off the shelf. As Vulich demonstrated the technique, he altered the cheekbone structure of a face on the monitor, then used a mouse to grab an ear and move it higher on the head. "I can isolate any area of the face, or part of the face, such as an ear or nose, and change the feature's size," said Vulich. "I can vary the shading, the contours and angles, and change the colors."

In the early and mid-'80s Vulich and Burrell worked on a dozen Empire projects and credit that experience for learning how to work quickly on a wide variety of effects. Their other credits include GLORY and THE RIVER'S EDGE and work as supervisors for Savini on several films, including Romero and Dario Argento's TWO EVIL EYES.

Not long after forming their own company, Savini offered them their first feature assignment as supervisors on his directorial debut. That could have been a tough assignment, handling effects for a director who is a master at it himself.

"No," said Vulich, "Tom has been great. There were some things he was very insistent on in the design stage, but once those were worked out, he left us alone to do our work. Tom has been very easy to work with. With his background, he knows what he wants and he appreciates good work." □

Charles Crowley as the Chest Squib Zombie, realism achieved in small details.



Dark Shadows

The supernatural soap opera that fans kept alive returns to TV in prime time.

By Mark Dawidziak

Barnabas is back, and NBC has got him. But it won't be Jonathan Frid of the fondly remembered ABC daytime series who'll be biting necks in prime time. Series creator Dan Curtis has assembled an all new cast for the new series, which will air as a mid-season replacement. Curtis, in the midst of bringing the new DARK SHADOWS to prime time, said he avoided studying tapes of the old series. "I really haven't looked at the old shows very carefully," he said. "I saw a couple of them when they were running on a local station out here."

Unless you count the ratings, there was nothing particularly horrific about the old DARK SHADOWS during its first year. The series was heading nowhere except for cancellation. Executive producer Curtis had sold ABC on his idea for a gothic soap opera, but viewers weren't flocking to Collinwood, Maine. DARK SHADOWS began its daytime run on June 27, 1966. The serial started with Victoria Winters (Alexandra Moltke) arriving at Collinwood mansion to assume her duties as governess to young David Collins (David Henesy).

By far the biggest name in the cast was Joan Bennett, a

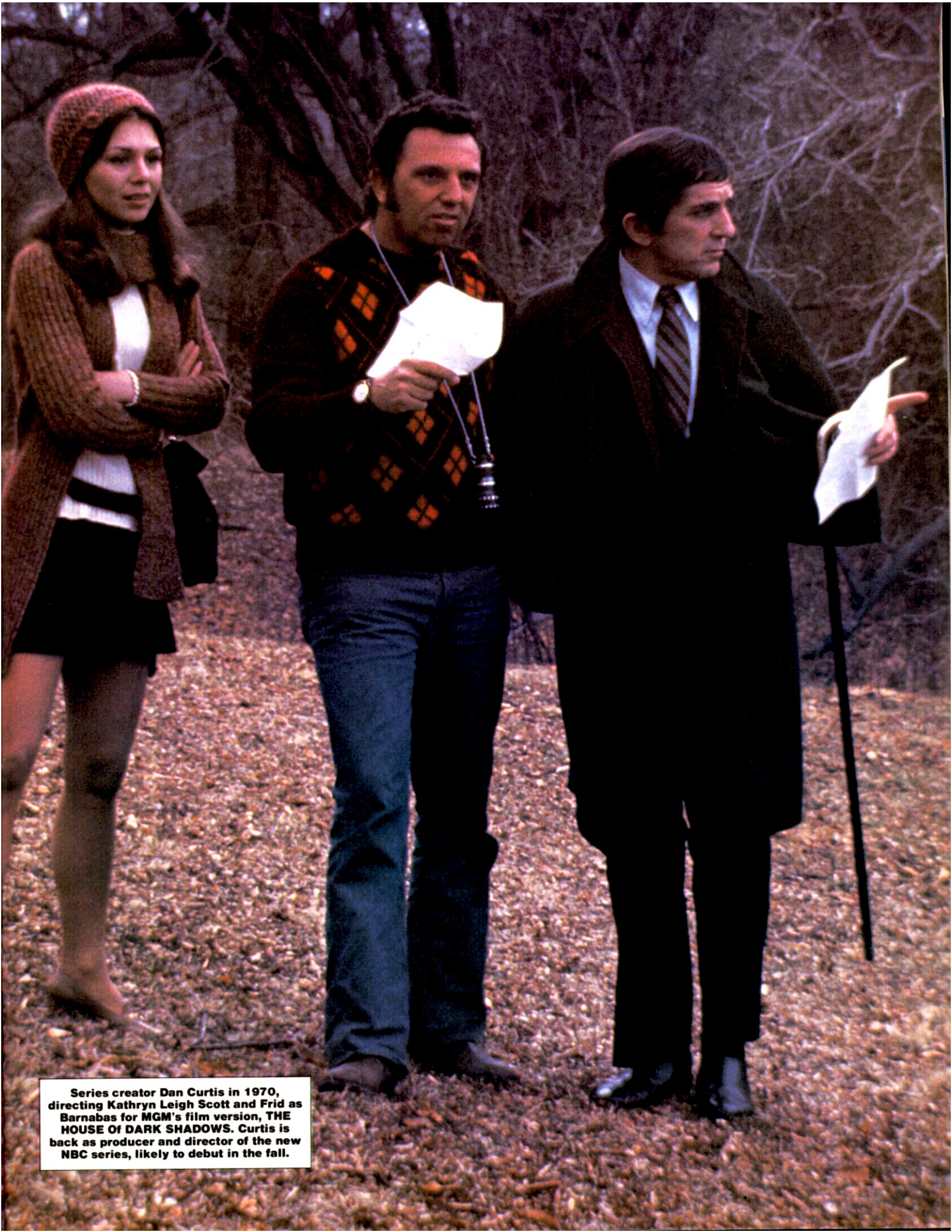


Jonathan Frid, who played Barnabas, the reluctant vampire of modern/gothic Collinwood, Maine, today tours in his own one-man stage shows.

studio-system star whose leading men included the likes of Spencer Tracy and Humphrey Bogart. But even this splash of Hollywood glamour wasn't helping DARK SHADOWS. Curtis credited his children with hitting on the idea of spiking his gothic mix with some supernatural themes. "There was nothing supernatural in it," he said. "When it was going down the tubes, my kids said to make it scary. I said, 'Why not? I've got nothing to lose.' So I put a ghost on, and when the ghost appeared, the ratings jumped. And that's when I started experimenting."

In April, 1967, Willie Loomis (John Karlen) opened the chained coffin of a 175-year-old vampire named Barnabas Collins, played by Shakespearean actor Jonathan Frid. "Barnabas was brought in because I wanted to see exactly how much I could get away with, never intending that he would be anything more than a vampire that I would drive a stake into," Curtis recalled. "I wanted to see how far I could go on the show into the supernatural, and I figured there was nothing more bizarre than a vampire."

Frid, too, believed the engagement wouldn't last long, especially after his first show. "I was so bloody nervous," the native of Canada said. "I was



Series creator Dan Curtis in 1970, directing Kathryn Leigh Scott and Frid as Barnabas for MGM's film version, THE HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS. Curtis is back as producer and director of the new NBC series, likely to debut in the fall.

Dark Shadows

DAN CURTIS GENRE AUTEUR

Besides his ever popular vampire soap opera, Curtis has a distinguished genre oeuvre.

By Mark Dawidziak

There's a Jekyll-and-Hyde nature to the career of Dan Curtis. Some know him as the Emmy-winning Hollywood producer and director of the 1983 miniseries *THE WINDS OF WAR* and its 1988-89 sequel *WAR AND REMEMBRANCE*—a staggering 47 1/2 hours of prime-time ABC television based on Herman Wouk's World War II novels.

Others know Dan Curtis as the New York producer who spooked daytime viewers with the supernatural soap opera *DARK SHADOWS* (ABC, 1966-71). In fact, Curtis has said it was his desire to be remembered for more than just *DARK SHADOWS* that prompted him to try the miniseries form on such a grand scale. Having secured a place in television history beyond Barnabas Collins, the burly Bridgeport, Connecticut native happily agreed to pursue a prime-time revival of *DARK SHADOWS* for NBC, with British actor Ben Cross as Barnabas.

But, even if you consider Curtis as merely a merchant of menace, *DARK SHADOWS* is only the beginning of a rather distinguished story. Between



British actor Ben Cross, baring fangs as the new prime-time Barnabas.

the daytime and prime-time versions of the Collinsport gang, Curtis made several acclaimed contributions to the horror genre. He did so much that was so good that, in 1978, the *Los Angeles Times* dubbed him television's "master of the macabre."

During the making of his high profile miniseries, Curtis was reluctant to discuss his decade in the horror field. The success of his miniseries changed all that, and today the curly-haired, 62-year-old producer-director has a grand time recalling the years of unleashing witches, werewolves and warlocks on TV and movie audiences.

"I had to shake the *DARK*

Curtis directs Cross on the set as the reluctant vampire returns to Collinwood. *DARK SHADOWS* sprung from Curtis' love of the classic Universal horror films.



Kate Jackson as Collinwood governess Daphne Harridge and Jonathan Frid as Bramwell Collins in an 1841 parallel time segment of *DARK SHADOWS* in 1971.

SHADOWS image," Curtis said, "not because I wasn't proud of the work I had done, but because I wanted to move on and do other things. I didn't want to try to squeak another door. There's nothing tougher than that. People don't realize that it's far more difficult to do a horror picture well than a straight drama. That's why most supernatural pictures stink. It attracts a lot of people who have no talent and don't know what the hell they're doing. Now, I'm telling you from experience. I know that the supernatural pictures I made were really good, and they were really good because I knew what the hell I was doing. It was very, very difficult.

Anybody can make a gory, slasher type of horror if you don't have to end it or make it clever. That's easy, and it's not really horror. Those things are abominations as far as I'm concerned.

"*DARK SHADOWS* was never a gory, slasher type of horror. It's an enormously tough thing to do right, and that's why you see really terrible things all the time. I got into the field because I love it. This sprang from a deep childhood fascination with the genre."

Besides *DARK SHADOWS*—including two feature films, *HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS* (1970), marking Curtis' directing debut, and *NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS* (1971)—Curtis' horror achievements include *THE NIGHT STALKER*, starring Darren McGavin as monster-fighter Carl Kolchak, the highest-rated TV movie ever when it aired in 1971. "The horror was taken seriously," said Curtis, who produced the film, directed by John Llewellyn Moxey. "But like in most of my horror films, there's that little laugh, that little smile."

Curtis said he is planning a new TV movie for McGavin as Kolchak, though he had no connection with the short-

continued on page 60

“I got into the horror field because I love it. DARK SHADOWS sprang from a deep childhood fascination with the genre.”

- Director Dan Curtis -

absolutely terrified because of the amount of money involved with a television show. That scared me. I just knew I'd be canned over the weekend. I was waiting for the phone call. I was shocked that they allowed me to come back. What happened was that the fear and discomfort registered in the performance. When I saw myself on the air, my eyes were so glazed over with terror that I scared myself. It was fear and nervousness that gave me my style."

DARK SHADOWS was on its way to becoming a cult hit and a pop-culture phenomenon. Curtis had a new star. "Who knew?" the producer said. "I brought the vampire in and it suddenly became this gigantic hit. Then I thought, 'Now what am I going to do?' I couldn't kill him off, so that's when I turned him into the reluctant vampire. It really caught the imagination of the audience. DARK SHADOWS came from my mind as the way I remembered the classic horror films that were around when I was a kid, even though they weren't that way. That was my memory of them. It was that same haunting quality we were after."

The challenge of building this reluctant vampire characterization was tossed to Frid, who had studied at London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts and earned a master's in directing from the Yale School of Drama. "The irony is that I'm not a horror fan," said Frid. "I remember seeing Bela Lugosi in DRACULA when I was very young, but I graduated very quickly to Cary Grant pictures and had no more interest in horror."

Frid decided it would be best to approach an unrealistic role in a realistic manner. "I know I

had a good approach to the character," he said. "I tried to make him a perfectly sensible person. I never played a vampire. I played him as a man with a hell of a conflict. But I never could perfect what I wanted to do, and that stiffness just fed Barnabas because he was so uptight."

And the viewers responded. Frid's brooding portrayal made him an overnight matinee idol. The merchandising explosion included DARK SHADOWS bugle-gum cards, comic books, board games and posters. There were Viewmaster reels, a syndicated comic strip for newspapers, a hit soundtrack album and a series of thirty paperback novels.

When Frid puts together his three one-man shows these days, he is sure to mix the classical and humorous readings with works by Edgar Allan Poe and Stephen King. "I know what side my bread is buttered on," the actor said. "People who come to see Jonathan Frid expect one or two spookers."

The realistic Frid knows that he'll never completely exorcise his association with the 175-year-old vampire Barnabas Collins. Frid doesn't mind talking about DARK SHADOWS these days, as long as

Curtis and DARK SHADOWS composer Robert Cobert in 1988, on the set of Curtis' acclaimed World War II mini-series, Herman Wouk's WAR AND REMEMBRANCE.



Louis Edmonds as Roger Collins and Joan Bennett as Elizabeth Collins Stoddard in a 1966 DARK SHADOWS. Inset: Jean Simmons and Roy Thinnes as NBC's new owners of Collinwood.

fans realize there's an actor behind those vampire fangs. "It's not that I'm adamant about DARK SHADOWS," he said. "I've totally forgotten the story lines. I didn't know what they were half the time I was doing it."

"I've often said the show had its beautiful moments," said Frid. "It could be magical, but most of the time we reached for the stars and fell flat on our faces. The one thing I'd tell fans is not to be obsessed with the characters. Knock it off when the show is over."

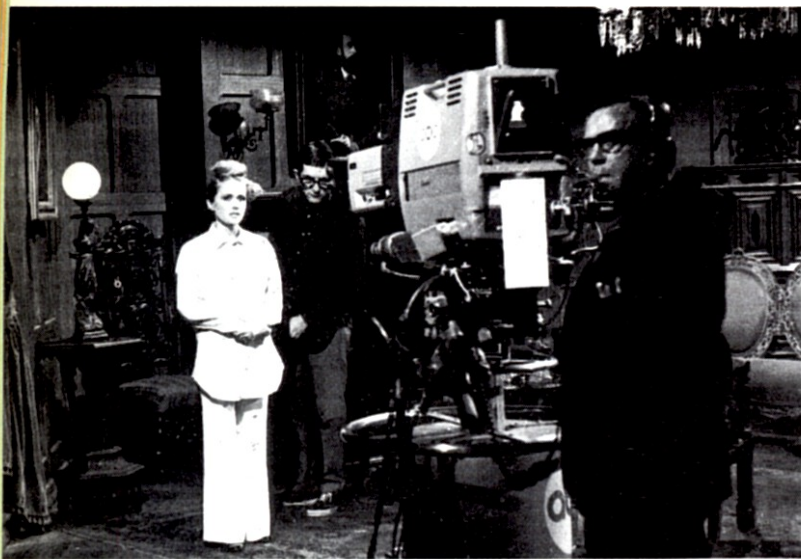
After DARK SHADOWS, Frid faced the curse of type-casting. He appeared in the 1972 movie THE DEVIL'S DAUGHTER and the 1974 feature SEIZURE, the offbeat horror film that marked the

directorial debut of Oliver Stone. Yet Frid wants to put a stake through the story that Barnabas drained the blood from his career and drove him into seclusion. He places more blame on inept agents than on Barnabas.

In recent years, Frid has toured the country in an "Arsenic and Old Lace" revival starring Jean Stapleton and developed his three one-man shows: *Jonathan Frid's Fools & Fiends*, *Shakespearean Odyssey* and *Fridiculousness* (humor and horror, from Groucho Marx to Poe).

"I've never been so happy in all my life," Frid said. "I get to play all the parts. All three of my one-man shows are sprinkled with macabre things. Each has humor and suspense, however. They're not blood-and-guts horror stories. I'm not interested in intestines being where they shouldn't be. I think blood and gore is a bore."

The daytime DARK SHADOWS craze led to a theatrical feature film in 1970, MGM's HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS, made while the soap was still on the air. Curtis produced the movie, which he also used to make his directing debut. "I looked at the feature film we made and thought it held up amazingly well," Curtis said. "It wasn't done like the soap. It was done like a very classy



Frid rehearses on the set before ABC's videotape camera set-up in 1969, with Nancy Barrett as Carolyn Stoddard. Barrett is now a New York stage actress.

piece of film. It was the same premise, except we killed everybody, which you couldn't do on the show." Curtis encored with another MGM feature in 1971, *NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS*, released as the ABC series left the air.

"It was hard not to be aware of the incredible following that the show had developed," said Matthew Hall, a pre-teen youngster when his mother, Grayson Hall, was playing Dr. Julia Hoffman, and his father, Sam Hall, was one of the show's principal writers. "There was always a crowd outside. I remember leaving the studio the night that Jimi Hendrix died and seeing the crowd. I remember thinking, 'Jimi Hendrix just died. What are you worrying about DARK SHADOWS for?' I was even featured in *16 Magazine*, and I wasn't doing anything."

Hall and his father Sam are now the chief writers on Curtis' prime-time revival of *DARK SHADOWS*. "I remember Jonathan Frid and Nancy Barrett sitting around the dining room table when I came home from soccer practice," said Matthew, reminiscing. "I remember being on the set, which was like a second home."

Hall pegged the success of the original show on the characters. "I think the secret was that no matter how bizarre the plots got, you were still interested in the characters," he said. "You have this achingly tormented vampire. What a marvelous character."

At the age of 44, Frid was receiving about 6,000 fan letters a week. The key *DARK SHADOWS* demographic was unquestionably teenagers. The show's average audience was fifteen million viewers, and 90 percent of them were teens.

The fan fervor for the original show still sticks in Curtis' mind. "I remember the crowds in those days," Curtis said. "It was absolutely insane. We'd come out of this little dinky studio on 53rd Street and there'd be 500 screaming kids outside. It was unbelievable. I have never seen anything like it. We had the time of our lives in those crazy days. It really was a lot of fun."

Thayer David, who played Professor Stokes, was in demand as a character actor, but most of the soap's regular performers were young actors getting their first taste of television. "For a lot of us, it represents our first work," said Kathryn Leigh Scott, who played Maggie Evans. "I was nineteen years old, it was my first job and it really was a baptism by fire. I was so young that I didn't know enough to feel the pressure."

"We were a close group. We'd meet for drinks after the show. Thayer David called us a repertory company, and that's exactly what we were. We all enjoyed working with each other. Grayson Hall used to say, 'Have you ever noticed we all have big faces?' That was Dan's touch. Dan was a genius at casting."

"I remember the crowds. We'd come out of this dinky studio on 53rd Street and there'd be 500 screaming kids. It was insane."

- Series creator Dan Curtis -

"I looked at *DARK SHADOWS* as the first rung of a giant ladder," said Lara Parker, who played Angelique as a witch and a vampire. "Now I look back on it as the most fun I ever had in this business. It was my first professional job. There were beautiful costumes and terrific plots. There was always a group of fans recognizing you at the skating rink, in the subway, at a ballgame. My acting seems terrible to me today. I cringe. There are some good moments, though. But we were learning. As the show went on, I got better."

With the success of *Barnabas*, Curtis opened the supernatural gates with a vengeance. He and producer Robert Costello introduced a warlock (Humbert Allen Astredo as warlock Nicholas Blair), a man-made monster (Robert Rodan as Adam), as well as a host of witches, werewolves and ghosts.

Lightning struck again when David Selby joined the cast as the silent spirit of Quentin Collins. Decked out in his mutton-chop sideburns, Selby played poor Quentin as a ghost, a werewolf and in a *PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* phase.

"I hadn't been in New York too long before the offer to do *DARK SHADOWS* came along," Selby remembered. "That was the first television I'd ever done, and the character didn't even speak for a while. That built up a sort of mystique about him. The character had a lot going for it. I was lucky to hit a show with longevity and popularity."

Helping the spooky proceedings along was the eerie music composed by musical director Bob Cobert. His "Quentin's Theme" remains one of the biggest selling singles to come out of daytime television. "I had done one horror show before—*WAY OUT* [CBS, 1961] for David Susskind," Cobert said. "*DARK SHADOWS* was very easy to do. Dan [Curtis] has a good ear and he's very direct. You always know where you stand with Dan." Cobert would go on to score most of Curtis' other projects, including his miniseries *THE WINDS OF WAR* and *WAR AND REMEMBRANCE*.

Most of the daytime directing was handled by John Sedwick and Lela Swift. And the writing team was headed by Art Wallace, Gordon Russell and Sam Hall. "I don't think the network ever really believed

Rehearsing *DARK SHADOWS* in 1968, seated (left) Joan Bennett, Frid, and Betsy Durkin, who played Victoria Winters for four weeks, (right) director Lela Swift.





Alexandra Moltke as Victoria Winters in 1968, terrorized by (l to r) Lara Parker as witch Angelique, Robert Rodan as man-made-monster Adam, Frid as Barnabas and Humbert Allen Astredo as warlock Nicholas Blair. Inset: Joanna Going as Winters on the NBC prime time update.



it was happening," Hall said. "I still get letters. We're all still being haunted by it."

When Curtis hired Hall to write for DARK SHADOWS, he was a veteran daytime scribe who had worked on THE BRIGHTER DAY. After DARK SHADOWS, Hall wrote for SANTA BARBARA and ONE LIFE TO LIVE, joined on the latter in 1983 by his grown-up son, Matthew. When Curtis agreed to revive DARK SHADOWS in prime time for NBC, he approached Hall about joining the team. Hall gave him two things: a definite maybe and a copy of Matthew's first novel, *Nightmare Logic*, a Bantam mass-market paperback. A few days later, Hall's phone rang. It was Curtis: "Your son is sicker than you ever thought about being." Curtis ended up hiring both Halls to help bring DARK SHADOWS back to television.

Unlike the new show, the original daytime drama was shot on videotape, which production methods of the day made tantamount to a live performance: the cameras very rarely stopped rolling. "Tape in those days was akin to being live because it was difficult and expensive to edit," said Jerry Lacy, who played Reverend Trask. "So you only stopped for a real disaster. That's why so many goofs got on the air. It

was tremendous fun but tremendous hard work, especially when you had pages and pages of incantations to memorize." Lacy is known for his stage and film roles as Humphrey Bogart in Woody Allen's PLAY IT AGAIN SAM. These days Lacy often appears with his wife Julia Duffy on NEWHART.

"I have a lot of good memories," Selby said about taping the old DARK SHADOWS. "You talk about learning on your feet. You taped an episode once through, and if you made a mistake, you just kept going." Selby, who also played Quentin Collins as a werewolf on the original show, went on to great success as regular Richard Channing on CBS' FALCON CREST.

"It had a spontaneous feel to it," Parker said of the way the original DARK SHADOWS was taped. "Sometimes we had to tape without even a dress rehearsal. It had an edge to it. It was easy to deal with the fear because we believed it would go out once and never be seen again. I can remember actually stopping only two times in five years."

"You had to be a good team player," Karlen said. "I think that notion of being a good player helped me on CAGNEY & LACEY." Karlen went on to win an Emmy for his portrayal

DARK SHADOWS ON VIDEO

MPI releases twenty episodes of the old show on cassette each month.

By Mark Dawidziak

Home video tapes of a soap opera that left the air about twenty years ago? The idea sounds absurd, all right. How could MPI Home Video expect consumers to keep buying the hours and hours that pile up when a serial is on the air five times a week for five years?

But MPI chief executive officer Waleed B. Ali knew he wasn't dealing with just any soap opera. When DARK SHADOWS ended its ABC run on April 2, 1971, the fans refused to disband. Annual DARK SHADOWS conventions have grown in size and intensity. "Why not?" asked the series creator and producer, Dan Curtis. "It certainly was imaginative entertainment."

MPI launched the release of DARK SHADOWS on video cassettes in October, 1989, with Jonathan Frid, who once wouldn't attend the conventions, happily doing interviews. "I'm not anti-vampire," Frid said at the time. "I'm pleased and amazed that it's still popular. I'm as amazed as I was when it first took off."

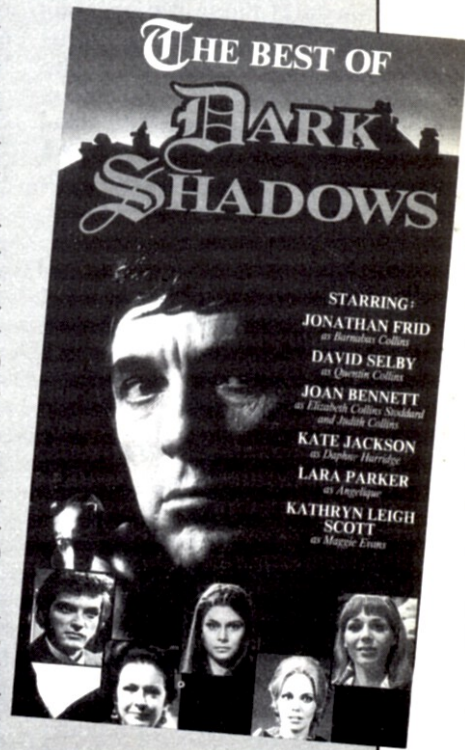
The two-hour RESURRECTION OF BARNABAS COLLINS is priced at \$29.98 and includes a summary of the soap's first year (before Frid joined the cast) and the first five episodes with Barnabas. At the same time, MPI released DARK SHADOWS Volume 2-4, a three-pack with five episodes on each tape (Barnabas episodes 6 through 20 priced at \$79.98).

"The success of DARK SHADOWS on video has been terrific," Ali said. "We knew that it would be popular, but we didn't anticipate

the nostalgic fervor that the release has created. Old fans of the show are as loyal to DARK SHADOWS today as they were when the show originally aired more than twenty years ago."

The response was so enthusiastic that, starting at the beginning of this year, MPI stepped up its DARK SHADOWS schedule to monthly four-packs (twenty episodes at \$79.98). By the end of the year, MPI will have released 52 tapes of episodes and a 30-minute BEST OF DARK SHADOWS compilation.

"Do you want to know about the popularity of DARK SHADOWS?" asked Kathryn Leigh Scott, who played Maggie Evans on the daytime show. "I took a trip to Africa and was out in a Land Rover, watching lions feed. Another Land Rover pulled up and a little girl recognized me as Maggie Evans." □





Curtis in 1971, directing David Selby and Lara Parker in a scene from NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS, a second MGM feature based on the series, sans Barnabas.

“Talk about excitement, about getting your heart going early in the morning, it was live on tape. There was no turning back.”

- Series creator Dan Curtis -

of Harvey Lacey. “I’m forty pounds heavier and I have a mustache,” said Karlen, “but people still recognize me from DARK SHADOWS. It was a unique show, and I’m still very close with many of the people from it. And I know that to a certain segment of the audience, I’ll always be Willie Loomis.”

“It was live on tape was what the hell it was,” said Curtis of the original. “There was no turning back. You taped for a half-hour and all the music and all the commercials were in. You talk about excitement. You talk about getting your heart going early in the morning. When we looked at the stories, we’d say, ‘Oh, this is working, let’s keep with this.’ Or we’d say, ‘Oh, no, I wish we knew we were going to do that, because then we wouldn’t have done this.’”

As DARK SHADOWS ran out of steam, Curtis and the writers were re-working everything from *Dorian Gray* to *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. “I wanted to say goodbye to it so bad I couldn’t see straight,” Curtis said. “We got around to the last year and I was completely tapped out idea-wise. And we ended up with some dreadful stories during the last year. It was like being in jail. At the end, I was barely associating with it. I just couldn’t deal with it anymore. I was so glad

when they finally put me out of my misery and got me the hell out of there. I couldn’t have gone on any longer.”

It all came to an end after 1,225 episodes on April 2, 1971. Yet the fans wouldn’t let go. In the early ‘80s, DARK SHADOWS became the first daytime soap opera to go into syndicated reruns. Last year, MPI Home Video started issuing episodes on cassettes (see page 29). In January, NBC announced its prime-time revival of the series. And in May, basic-cable service The Sci-Fi Channel announced it will air original DARK SHADOWS episodes twice a day when it launches in December.

Selby, Parker, Lacy, and Scott credit the fans with NBC’s decision to seek a DARK SHADOWS revival. “They kept the show alive all of

these years,” Parker marveled. (For information about the show’s fan clubs and conventions, write to: Dark Shadows Festival, P.O. Box 92, Maplewood, NJ 07040).

After playing the dual role of witch Angelique/Cassandra, Parker was in NBC’s DOCTOR’S HOSPITAL. She was part of a mini-DARK SHADOWS reunion of sorts when she joined Selby and Thayer David in the WASHINGTON BEHIND CLOSED DOORS miniseries. David, a busy character actor before DARK SHADOWS, died in 1978, two years after playing the fight promoter in ROCKY.

Fates of other DARK SHADOWS principals after leaving the show are as follows:

- Joan Bennett went on to appear in Dario Argento’s SUSPIRIA (1977). The Hollywood veteran retired in 1983.

- Kathryn Leigh Scott, who played Collinsport ingenue Maggie Evans and doubled as Josette, Barnabas’ lost love from the past, has appeared on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION. In 1986, her Pomegranate Press published *My Scrapbook Memories of Dark Shadows*. Her second book, *The Dark Shadows*

Companion: 25th Anniversary, is to be published this fall. She remains close friends with Parker.

- Kate Jackson, who played Daphne Harridge, Collinwood’s 1840 governess, introduced as a benevolent ghost, moved into prime time with series like CHARLIE’S ANGELS (ABC, 1976-79), and most recently BABY BOOM (NBC, 1988-89).

- Grayson Hall died of cancer in 1985. Film buffs remember her portrayal of Judith Fellows in NIGHT OF THE IGUANA (1964), a performance that won her an Oscar nomination.

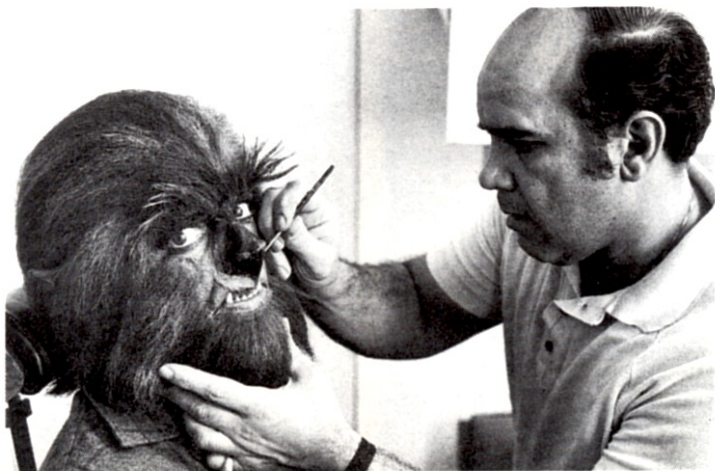
- Louis Edmonds who played Roger Collins has received several Emmy nominations for his work as Langley on ALL MY CHILDREN. He also has a cabaret show he performs in New York.

- Alexandra Moltke, who was Victoria Winters, got pregnant and quit the soap in the middle of her five-year contract, complaining she was under-utilized. As Alexandra Isles, she made headlines as “the former soap opera actress” who flew from Europe to testify against her former lover Claus von Bulow.

- Humbert Allen Astredo, who played warlock Nicholas Blair, is a busy stage actor who played Van Helsing to Martin Landau’s Count in the national tour of *Dracula*.

Curtis said he didn’t study the old DARK SHADOWS when he recrafted the show for NBC, but he still watches it for fun. “It’s still amazingly effective,” said Curtis. “It looks crude by today’s standards. We were working with a ridiculous little set. There are lots of mistakes—things falling down, people forgetting lines. But, after all this time, you can still see what sucked in the audience. The magic is there.” □

Makeup man Vincent Loscalzo applies finishing touches to a werewolf played by stunt coordinator Alex Stevens for a 1969 episode in the show’s monster parade.



Dark Shadows

HORROR IN THE BLOOD

The father and son writing team of Sam and Matthew Hall spans the show's generations.

By Mark Dawidziak

Matthew Hall, the 31-year-old junior member of the DARK SHADOWS revival's writing team, thinks it's about time he got a paycheck from Barnabas Collins and the gang. They've owed him some blood money for many years. When Hall was only eleven, it seemed that everyone he knew was getting a paycheck from DARK SHADOWS. His father, Sam Hall, was one of the ABC daytime soap opera's principal writers. His mother, the late Grayson Hall, played Julia Hoffman, the doctor trying to cure Barnabas Collins of his vampire curse. And all the actors who would visit their New York City apartment were also on the show.

To make matters worse, young Matthew once or twice

dropped suggestions at the dinner table that Sam would incorporate into the series. "I think those were my first contributions as a writer," said Hall. "Except for the children I saw at school, everybody I knew did DARK SHADOWS—my father, my mother, their friends. I was a real DARK SHADOWS kid. I grew up on it. I was hanging around the studio all the time. I did my homework in my mom's dressing room."

"I remember the makeup man with nothing to do for a couple hours so he made me up into a werewolf and I spent the afternoon terrorizing kids on 9th Avenue. With both parents on the show, it was our dinner conversation. So, when Dan Curtis hired me for the new DARK SHADOWS, my feeling was, 'Finally! It's about



Lara Parker as Angelique, the witch turned into a vampire by warlock Nicholas Blair, posing before a portrait of Barnabas in a episode first telecast in 1968.

time.' In many ways, it's like going home. It's just so neat."

Completing the circle is the chance for Hall to work with his father again. Although just starting as the new associate head writer of ABC's GENERAL HOSPITAL, Sam Hall agreed to work as a consultant on the new NBC prime-time version of DARK SHADOWS. A '50s graduate of the Yale Drama School, Hall said he "fell into television" on his way to writing stage plays. "I was not a horror fan," he said. "I had no idea I could do it. I'm still not sure I can do it."

Even when his wife was cast as Julia Hoffman and Sam would help her rehearse by feeding her cue lines, the writer had no thought of working for DARK SHADOWS. The idea was floated by Curtis at a party Sam attended with Grayson. "I'd never agree to write for anything at a party," Sam said he told Curtis. "If you're serious, let's have a real meeting in your office."

A couple of days later, Hall was sitting in front of Curtis. "Well," the producer asked, "would you like to write for it?" Hall said he replied, "What makes you think I can do it? Wouldn't you like to read something I've written?" Hall

said Curtis just answered, "No. I go on instinct, and I think you can do it." Hall was with the show until it ended in 1971. He also collaborated with Curtis on THE HOUSE OF DARK SHADOWS and NIGHT OF DARK SHADOWS feature films and the FRANKENSTEIN television drama.

"Any television show is a bizarre education," Hall said, "but that's particularly true when you work with Dan Curtis. All Dan Curtis productions have fog inside the houses. I never understood how it got there." □

The Halls, writers in residence on the set of the new NBC prime time series.



Wife and mother Grayson Hall (right) was a regular on the show as Dr. Hoffman. Here she plays Julia Collins, with Nancy Barrett, in an 1841 parallel time story.



Dark Shadows

Series creator Dan Curtis on reviving his legendary vampire.

By Mark Dawidziak

When the new DARK SHADOWS was not among the nine shows announced to debut on NBC's fall schedule, some fans thought network entertainment president Brandon Tartikoff had put a stake through Dan Curtis' prime-time revival of his daytime supernatural soap opera (ABC, 1966-71). Series creator and executive producer Curtis had trumpeted the show by saying "I can't imagine this not going on in the fall. They're really hot for this one. It would take something very bizarre and cataclysmic for this not to go on in the fall."

There were some uneasy moments at MGM/UA Television, the series backers, and Dan Curtis Productions last May after Tartikoff unveiled the schedule for the new season. Had they been duped? Had NBC decided that Barnabas Collins was a not-ready-for-prime-time vampire? Tartikoff quickly calmed the Curtis office by heaping praise on the new two-hour DARK SHADOWS TV movie pilot and giving Curtis an order for eleven additional episodes. Of all the series that didn't make the fall schedule, Tartikoff



Ben Cross as the new Barnabas Collins, with Jean Simmons as Collinwood matriarch Elizabeth Collins Stoddard, breathing new life into time-honored roles.

said, DARK SHADOWS came the closest to getting the call.

Curtis "did a spectacular job of directing and co-writing" the TV movie, Tartikoff said, so "chances are good that you'll see it" this season as a midseason replacement series. Curtis and his team believe they'll get the first hour time slot that opens up. Since that translates into "be ready at any time," DARK SHADOWS went back into production late

last July.

"The opening two hours turned out great," Curtis said. "The plot draws on the series and the feature film we did, with some surprises tossed in. It has the same feeling, though. We're still grappling with the same storylines. Barnabas is a reluctant vampire. What will Dr. Julia Hoffman do now? I'm facing the same devils I faced last time."

The new Barnabas Collins is British actor Ben Cross, whose previous television credits include the miniseries THE FAR PAVILLIONS for HBO and THE CITADEL for PBS. His feature films include THE UNHOLY, THE ASSISI UNDERGROUND, PAPER HOUSE and the Oscar-winning CHARLOTS OF FIRE, in which he portrayed Olympic runner Harold Abrahams.

Taking over the Julia Hoffman role originated by the late Grayson Hall is former horror B-queen Barbara Steele. After appearing in such movies as BLACK SUNDAY, THE PIT AND THE PENDULUM and Fellini's 8½, Steele turned to producing. Her association with Curtis includes a producer's credit on his WAR AND REMEMBRANCE miniseries.



Ben Cross as the soap-opera vampire, back in p

"I think Barbara is actually a little nervous about doing this part, but she shouldn't be," Curtis said. "The entire cast is flawless."

There are other recognizable names in the cast. The role of family matriarch Elizabeth Collins Stoddard was played in the original series by screen legend Joan Bennett. Curtis persuaded another screen legend, Jean Simmons (THE ROBE, HAMLET, GREAT EXPECTATIONS), to take the part. No newcomer to television, Simmons won an Emmy for the miniseries THE THORN BIRDS.

Roy Thinnes, David Vincent on ABC's THE INVADERS, plays Roger Collins. Most of the other regulars are newcomers: Joanna Going as Victoria Winters, Jim Fyfe as Willie Loomis, Veronica Lauren as the ghost of Sara, Ely Pauget as Maggie Evans, Eddie Jones as Sam, Barbara Blackburn and Joe Gordon Levitt.

Steve Feke is the supervising producer for MGM/UA Television. The revival, made in association with Dan Curtis Productions, will rely more on atmosphere than makeup and special effects, one insider



...time and getting to know Gloria (Hope North), a Collinsport resident out for a good time.

said, "but necks will be appropriately bitten, fangs will be bared and victims will look appropriately victimized."

"It's a little bolder perhaps, but we're not going to stray too far," said Sam Hall, a writer on the original show back as creative consultant. "Nobody knows whether the flash will be there until it goes on. Nobody knew that Jonathan Frid had it until it happened. I will say the bats are better—much better. There's been a technical advancement in the designing of bats."

Bob Cobert also returns as musical director. "The original theme will be used," he said. "We'll use the same

theme for Josette's music box and some of the other original pieces. I'd say it's about 65 percent new music to 35 percent original."

"We start the story much later than where the original series began," Curtis said. "Here I am turning around and doing it again. I guess I reached the point I was able to look at it from a different point of view."

Lara Parker, who played Angelique on the original show, said she's very interested to see the newcomers because Curtis is so innovative at casting. "Dan cast me completely against type—a blue-eyed, blond witch," she said. "It's

everything you don't expect a witch to be."

"Dan is DARK SHADOWS," said Matthew Hall who is writing for the new show, after growing up while his father wrote for the original and his mother, Grayson, played Dr. Julia Hoffman. "If Curtis could act out all the parts, build the sets, do the lighting, write the music, in addition to writing, directing and producing, he would. He'd be all 300 people in the film crew. It's a heck of an education working on this show. Between Dan and my father, a dumb idea gets shot down very quickly in this office."

"Dan can come off strong and tough," said Sam Hall, "but I think Curtis is a complete romantic at heart. He's certainly a very exciting man to work with."

The Halls have thought about watching someone else play the Hoffman role. "Sure, I was worried," Matthew Hall said. "After all, someone else playing Julia Hoffman? And not just my mother. Remember, I grew up with the original cast. There's a strong feeling of support for them. But Barbara Steele is a formidable presence as Julia, and the whole show feels like DARK SHADOWS. It feels like what I remember DARK SHADOWS being."

"Barbara Steele is an electric personality," Sam Hall said. "She's a terribly nice person and terribly good as Julia, although quite different from Grayson."

Matthew Hall gives a large part of the credit for the revival to the show's loyal fans. "They are in many ways responsible for this," he said. "They kept it



Former scream queen Barbara Steele plays Dr. Julia Hoffman, the medical researcher trying to cure Barnabas.

alive all these years. They are tremendously loyal, which is why I think you'll absolutely see some of the original actors salted in along the way. I've been fighting for the original cast members to be used in some way. It would be such a nice thing to do. I think it's inevitable."

The Curtis team would like to see a premiere date near Halloween for the new series, perhaps in the important November sweeps period. But mid-season replacement can mean airing as late as next May, and sometimes series are held until the next season.

Both Tartikoff and Curtis said they would like to find a way to use some of the original cast members in new roles. Laura Parker and Jerry Lacy said they would be interested. Others (David Selby for one) said no thanks. "Of course I'd do it again," Parker said. "Why not? I can't imagine not wanting to be involved."

"No matter what happens, I'll be pursuing other projects," Curtis said, "and I can put DARK SHADOWS back on for all the people who have said to me, 'Oh, I ran home every day after school to catch it. I never missed it. It was my favorite show. I was so scared. I loved it.' Everybody tells me the same thing, so here we go again." □



Collinwood old and new: the Greystone mansion in Beverly Hills (left) is a step up from the soap opera's Seaview Terrace digs in Rhode Island (inset).





The grand guignol climax of Argento's homage to Poe's "The Black Cat," the discovered remains of Annabel (Madeleine Potter, right), bricked up into a wall by her mad lover. In Tom Savini's makeup tableaux, the corpse has been partially devoured by the blind, mutant kittens enfolded with her. Taurus Entertainment opens the Poe anthology for Halloween in major markets on October 26, leading off the double bill with Romero's version of "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar."



TWO EVIL EYES

Two of moviedom's ablest shockmeisters devise a cinematic ode to Edgar Allan Poe.

By Alan Jones

In the conference suite on the fifth floor of the Westin William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh resides the nerve center of TWO EVIL EYES, a \$9 million valentine to America's finest genre writer, Edgar Allan Poe, to be delivered at Halloween by two of the cinema's most renowned masters of terror, directors George Romero and Dario Argento. Written on a calendar in the busy production office is "D Day"—Dario Day—a date signaling a number of firsts for Italy's Alfred Hitchcock. It's the first of a 32-day shoot on Argento's first wholly American-based picture. It's the first time he's employed a dialogue coach for the most impressive cast he's ever assembled. And it's Argento's first film since TENEBRAE (1982) to be executive produced by his brother, Claudio.

Argento's "The Black Cat" is the second segment of TWO EVIL EYES, promoted at the 1989 Cannes Film Festival as EDGAR ALLAN POE, produced by Argento's ADC company in tandem with Achille Manzotti's Gruppo Bema organization. Romero finished directing his episode first, "The



Romero (left) and Argento, neither buddies nor stylistic soulmates, a team in Pittsburgh.

Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" and, despite losing five days of footage due to ghostly static on the new 500 ASA fast Kodak stock, Romero furiously edited while Argento embarked on his section of the movie. Argento wrapped filming in Pittsburgh in September 1989, and opened the film in Italy last January. Taurus Entertainment plans to release the film in major markets on October 26.

"I've been preparing this movie for well over a year now," said Argento, on location in Pittsburgh, in the happiest frame of mind he's been in

for years. "I don't trust anyone so I kept it to myself. I find it peculiar there are now about ten Poe-inspired films made or in the pipeline, and that we all announced them together at Cannes without knowing the others existed. Synchronicity must be a real force because I'm amazed everyone seemed to have the same idea at precisely the same time. Perhaps it's just the right moment for the kind of movie that takes a fresh look at Poe."

Originally TWO EVIL EYES was planned as a four-part Poe anthology with John Carpenter and Clive Barker's names,

among others, banded around. Then it was reduced to a three-parter with Wes Craven's involvement actively pursued by Argento. "That idea became a scheduling nightmare," said Argento. "Putting the package together was too difficult. Getting the three of us at the same time, in the same city, working on the same film proved too much. 'Whose part would be first in the line-up? What story? Would the budget be shared equally or did my section get the largest amount? What if my episode turns out worse/better than yours? I'll decide when you've done yours

first and I can see it.' Non-stop questions and months with lawyers trying to sort out contracts stretched out before me. Finish! I decided my name combined with Romero's was more than enough."

Romero and Argento had worked together before on the cult *splatstick* movie DAWN OF THE DEAD (1979) rescored and released as ZOMBIE by Argento in Italy. The two became firm friends in the process. Said Romero, "Our relationship is mainly work-orientated, and it has been preserved because we don't see each other more than neces-

"It's an homage with themes and character names from all of Poe's work," said Argento. "I made Poe the subliminal main character to put on screen what I feel about him."



Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar' instead."

Argento objected to Romero's desire to do "The Masque of the Red Death" because he was afraid of comparisons to what he termed "the original Corman masterpiece." Argento said he was happy with Romero's second choice because, like "The Black Cat," it had never been done properly cinematically. "It's the only zombie story Poe ever wrote," said Argento. "It's rather funny George ended up doing that."

While Romero's segment is very much a literal adaptation of the Poe tale—"An abbreviated concept needing a simple back story to flesh it out," according to Romero—Argento's "The Black Cat" is more a series of suggestions from the complete body of Poe's work. "None of the previous films based on 'The Black Cat' had anything to do with Poe," claimed Argento. "It's the longest and most articulate tale Poe ever wrote, but he stopped the story halfway through just when it began to get interesting. My script takes events to their natural conclusion."

"It's also a homage to Poe incorporating many themes and character names from all his works. It's the only story without a narrative name, so I made Poe the subliminal main character to put on screen what I feel about him. Many people have remarked how similar we are physically, dark and thin. You can draw your own conclusions as to what I'm attempting here. That's why the original title was POE. We had to change it because market research showed either people didn't know his name, or if they did, they thought it was a biographical movie. METROPOLITAN HORRORS was the other title we considered."

Recognizable throughout "The Black Cat" script are eclectic nods to Poe's "Berenice," "Annabel Lee," "The Pit and the Pendulum," "Ligeia," "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," "The Fall of the House of Usher," "South of Heaven" and "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym." Harvey Keitel plays Rod Usher, a tabloid crime photographer about to publish "Metropolitan Horrors," a volume of the more gruesome pictures he has "framed" over the years. His editor tells him he needs a good cover but Usher is stuck for inspiration. All he's used to doing is turning up minutes after Detective Inspector LeGrand at the scene of a homicide and snapping mutilated cadavers before they're taken away to the morgue.

When Usher's girlfriend Annabel, a violin teacher, brings home a stray black cat, Usher takes an instant dislike to it. While she's out one day, he strangles the cat and photographs the graphic torture for his cover. Annabel has suspicions about the cat's disappearance, confirmed when she sees Usher's book in a window, and she decides to leave her lover. Usher's mental state deteriorates as dreadful nightmares turn him into an alcoholic haunted by black cats, setting the stage for more bloody murder and supernatural retribution.

After axing a framing device where Poe told both stories "Arabian Nights" style in a haunted house for a wager, Argento set about casting the actors for his segment. He and Romero had originally discussed using Adrienne Barbeau for "Valdemar" and Harvey Keitel for "The Black Cat" way back in January. When both actors reacted enthusiastically, Argento decided to go for broke, casting other top



Makeup expert Tom Savini supplied this life-like split torso, constructed of gelatin, for Argento's homage to Poe's "Pit and the Pendulum." Inset: Argento and first assistant director Nick Mastandrea, setting up the shot.

play for "The Black Cat" with favored collaborator Franco Ferrini by the time the project was greenlighted in January 1989. And Romero began adapting "The Masque of the Red Death" as his chosen Poe story. Romero had hoped the film would be shot in Rome, starring Donald Sutherland, who was initially planned as a character link between both segments.

"Once I realized Dario didn't want a period setting for either story, I placed my segment in the future," said Romero. "But neither he nor Claudio were very keen on my treatment. The issue got confrontational when Roger Corman announced his own remake and everyone was relieved when I backed down and picked 'The

sary. We aren't exactly pals who meet once a year in Hawaii to catch up on each other's social news. But we have a mutual respect for our individual talents which many say share an association. So I was intrigued when Dario first pitched the Poe idea to me. What would our work look like back-to-back? And I needed something I wouldn't get too emotionally attached to, unlike MONKEY SHINES (1988), the boxoffice failure of which still rankles."

Argento wrote the screen-

names despite his well-documented anti-actor feelings. A roster of well-known talent unlike anybody he's ever worked with previously is the result: Madeleine Potter, John Amos and Oscar winners and nominees Kim Hunter, Sally Kirkland and Martin Balsam. Argento specifically wanted Balsam because "The Black Cat" storyboards contained scenes centered around a PSYCHO-inspired staircase. Rather than have everyone screaming "Hitchcock," he playfully confounds audience expectations by not using Balsam in the obvious way.

Edgar Allan Poe was born in Boston, January 19, 1809, and he died October 7, 1849 in Baltimore, where he's buried. Argento seriously considered Baltimore as a production base for TWO EVIL EYES for that reason. But Romero made Argento see the sense of filming in Pittsburgh once Romero's dreams of working in Rome were dashed. Although Romero has made every one of his own films in Pittsburgh, he has never used the city landscape to its maximum potential, preferring to keep his settings anonymous. "Valdemar" continues this enclosed "Anyplace, U.S.A." ethic. But for "The Black Cat" Argento scouted key locations all over town.

Madeleine Potter, playing Usher's girlfriend, bears more than a passing resemblance to Daria Nicolodi, Argento's *ex-inamorata*, SUSPIRIA co-writer and star mainstay of his films. The resemblance did not go unnoticed by the Italian crew members, but Potter herself was completely oblivious to this personal subtext because, like most of the cast, she only knew Argento by name and hadn't seen any of his films. Potter's first movie, THE BOSTONIANS, and her last, SLAVES OF NEW YORK, were both directed by James Ivory. And she arrived in Pittsburgh fresh from the Broadway production of Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, starring Mikhail Baryshnikov.

"I've been offered horror movies before and I always turned them down," said Pot-

DARIO ARGENTO ON EDGAR ALLAN POE

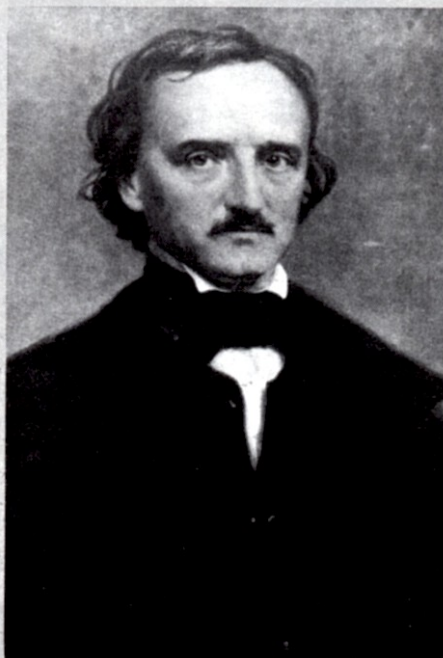
The Italian horror maestro explains his psychological kinship with the world of Poe.

By Dario Argento

I can no longer remember which story as an adolescent introduced me to Edgar Allan Poe, but I do remember it created a feeling of anxiety. It disturbed me and left me, for a long time, feeling strange and slightly sad. His narration, themes, hallucinations were so fascinating and unlike anything I'd read before. I was left pondering a thought that is still with me today. Is it a writer's duty to create impressions, emotions, that reflect suffering instead of pleasure? Terror instead of peace? Or is his mission to be a teacher? A voice for the majority opinion? An instrument for high moral thoughts?

I read the entire works of Poe, from the grotesque and at times humorous stories to those that marked the beginning of the modern detective stories. And I became curious to find out about this great poet. Poe's life was indeed tragic and terrible. Rarely has an artist lived in such close connection with his work. It was as if, by expressing feelings so fright-

Argento, opening Pandora's Box.



Poe, 1809-1849. Asks Argento, "Can a mind exist in peace that takes its inspiration from hell?"

ening and events so blood-curdling, he had opened up his own imaginary Pandora's Box.

The publication of "The Raven" marked the beginning of Poe's fame in America but he wasn't there to enjoy it. He was instead, drunk and ragged, wandering the back streets of Baltimore. When the President of the United States invited him to the White House, Poe arrived in such a wretched state that he was thrown out. During the last days of his life, still drunk and penniless, he was dragged, semiconscious, to various polling stations by gangsters working for a candidate and was made to drink until he lost his senses and then made to vote. Eventually, they left him in a coma in a back street where he died.

When I began to make films, I recognized that my

themes had some affinity with the events told by Poe in his stories, his hallucinatory worlds, his bloody visions. I asked myself: have I opened my Pandora's Box? Would I be invaded by my horrible thoughts? By my mad and perverse characters? Can a mind exist in peace that takes its inspiration from hell? If so, can it also love children, lovers, experience tenderness for the human race, cheer itself with the enchanting visions it meets?

This enigma has haunted me through the years. I have spied on my own actions. I have often listened to my own conversations, looking in the cracks for evil symptoms. Always afraid that the Pandora's Box would open at my feet. Luckily this hasn't happened, yet. But I am always mindful. In my solitary moments when some frightening idea strikes me and I think: with this I will make a film—Poe's handsome and intense face watches me, warns me to pay heed, to be careful.

The tragedy is that Poe wasn't careful. He wandered the streets and was lost. He walked down the paths of arcane secrets written by the monster within us all. And he died for it.

Little, sweet Poe. How you suffered. And how I love you.

This extract was translated from Argento's preface to "The Tales of Edgar Allan Poe" published in Italy in 1985.

ter. "They were too generic. But this was based on literature I've admired since I was eleven years old. Poe had an incredible vision and when I met Dario I realized he shared the same intelligent originality. We spontaneously connected in a way I can't really describe."

Potter's rapport with Argento may have been fueled by the passion both most evidently share for Poe. Potter turned almost rhapsodic when she discussed the film's subject matter. "Poe is great," she said. "Poe is cool. But the Vincent Price movies cheapened his name. His writing goes far deeper into despair than gore or horror. You only have to read the line, 'All that we see or seem is but a dream within a dream,' to pick up on that. The Price movies took everything at face value, whereas Dario's script takes everything at *most* value. Dario hasn't been flip-pant with any of the symbolism or character names plundered from other Poe stories. They all mean something. Dario has drawn on their poetry to conjure up an inspiring mystical atmosphere."

Potter's lofty aspirations for *TWO EVIL EYES* were framed in total ignorance of Argento's cinematic *oeuvre* and his penchant for excessive and extreme on-screen violence. But her experience on the film hasn't changed her mind. "Other uncaring directors use blood and effects in a careless way," said Potter. "But this isn't what Poe is about, and it certainly isn't what Dario is about from my perspective. He's using violence with strong justification—as an interior motor to accent the symbolism. Depicting violence is Dario's way of attempting to cut through pretension and make a grand gesture to connect his feelings with those of the audience. I would not be making *TWO EVIL EYES* my first fantasy film unless I understood where Dario was coming from and agreed with his ways of expressing insanity and beauty from this totally different stance. Dario has gone for the biggest choices as opposed to the smallest ones and you must look underneath the script for what's really being said. I'm finding it a fascinating process."

"Everyone on the crew is walking around clutching volumes of Poe stories," said makeup expert Tom Savini. "Dario forced us to rediscover one of our greatest writers."



Dario Argento with brother Claudio, directing in downtown Pittsburgh. Claudio produced the film for Argento's ADC company, their first together since 1982.

Potter's reading of Argento and the script is that both are working on many levels. "It's an exploration of witchcraft," said Potter. "It's also a study in metaphysics. If you leave out the supernatural elements, you also have an essay in Freudian psychology. Poe was pre-Freud and his themes dealt with many ideas which couldn't be grasped by human minds at the time. What Albert Camus said about the distance between a man's question and the unreasonable silence of the universe is central to 'Annabel Lee' and 'Ligeia'—the two Poe works I'm basing my character research on. The violence in Poe comes from his need to shatter that barrier and cause a scream to be heard in defiance of it. Bringing this subtext to a contemporary, realistic story without cheating the metaphysical and psychological elements is a vast acting challenge."

For her role as Annabel, Potter learned how to play the violin as believably as she could. Having grown up in West Africa surrounded by large cats, finding the feline strangeness Argento asked her to invest in her character has been quite easy, she said. Pot-

ter's Botticellian, ethereal look is important for Argento to communicate what he termed, "The power of central stillness." Argento paid Potter a high compliment when he enthused, "If Poe were alive today he would love her face—it has such a timeless beauty."

Despite Potter's professed rapport with Argento, she, like the other actors on the film, interfaced with the director through a dialogue coach, Ken Gargaro. Argento, ever disdainful of actors, is frank and upfront about Gargaro's role on the production. "He's keeping the actors away from me," said Argento. "It's as simple as that. English isn't my language. The lines in the script needed to be translated into the American idiom. Ken is doing that and helping the actors rewrite their dialogue so they are more comfortable with what they're saying. Ken is doing a wonderful job. He's a nice, cultured man and the best local discovery we've made."

Gargaro, director at the Pittsburgh Playhouse, has staged everything from *Evita*

to *El Grande De Coca Cola*. He said he's still trying to figure out exactly what his job description means on *TWO EVIL EYES*. Noted the soft-spoken and articulate dialogue coach, "Based on what I've actually been doing, I'm trying to dramatically interpret Dario's script for the English-speaking actors. Dario requested an English-speaking theatre, not film, director. I can see why he did. All the actors he hired have come out of the American stage tradition based on the Stanislavsky method. What that means is the actors are used to working with a subtext. I give them the circumstances they can respond to. Dario needed me to communicate the dramatic nature of the dialogue and help with rewrites. I get the general outline of what he wants expressed and then I talk to the actors in colloquial terms to put across his intentions. The script often contains moments of stilted translation and I iron those out. Once I heard Dario never sticks to his scripts anyway I felt more comfortable."

Gargaro's experience as a musician also benefited the production. "I helped Dario pick out all the incidental music to convey Madeleine's talents as a violinist," said Gargaro. "The concert chamber music is by Fritz Kreisler and I noticed Dario choreographed the camera to each cadenza. The piece she teaches her students is Bach's double violin concerto which also doubles as the strangling cat theme. I also commissioned an arrangement of a Simple Minds' tune to show her having fun in class. Music was vitally important to Poe and his characters. The sensual nature of music transcended normality in every story he wrote. Dario wanted a lot of music for his segment because it conveyed the essence of Poe, not the thrust of the film."

Like everyone else on *TWO EVIL EYES*, Gargaro is more familiar with Poe than the work of Argento. He scheduled a screening of *SUSPIRIA* at his Playhouse solely to see what all the fuss was about concerning the *ZOMBIE* producer that was about to eat Pittsburgh. Gargaro's contri-

TWO EVIL EYES

GRAND GUIGNOL ILLUSIONIST

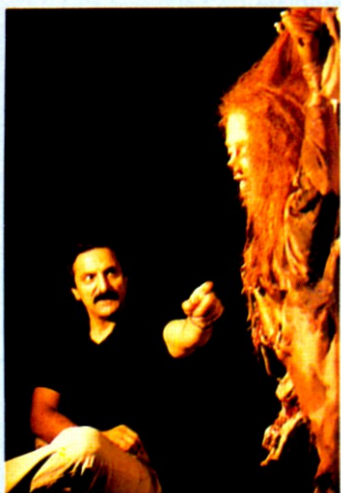
Makeup specialist Tom Savini was in charge of realizing Argento's gallery of horrors.

By Alan Jones

Playing a killer who digs up his cousin's cadaver in order to yank out all her teeth, makeup expert Tom Savini looks very out of place on the set of Dario Argento's "The Black Cat" segment of TWO EVIL EYES. Deliberately so, since Savini insisted on being dressed in Victorian garb to play his off-beat role in Argento's modern dress update. Said the self-styled King of Splatter, "Dario thinks I look a lot like Poe dressed this way. Other members haven't been so kind, they think I resemble Charles Manson!

"I always like to play a part in every film I'm doing effects on. It keeps my Screen Actors Guild benefits going and satisfies my latent acting abilities.

Savini, "in persona" with his art.



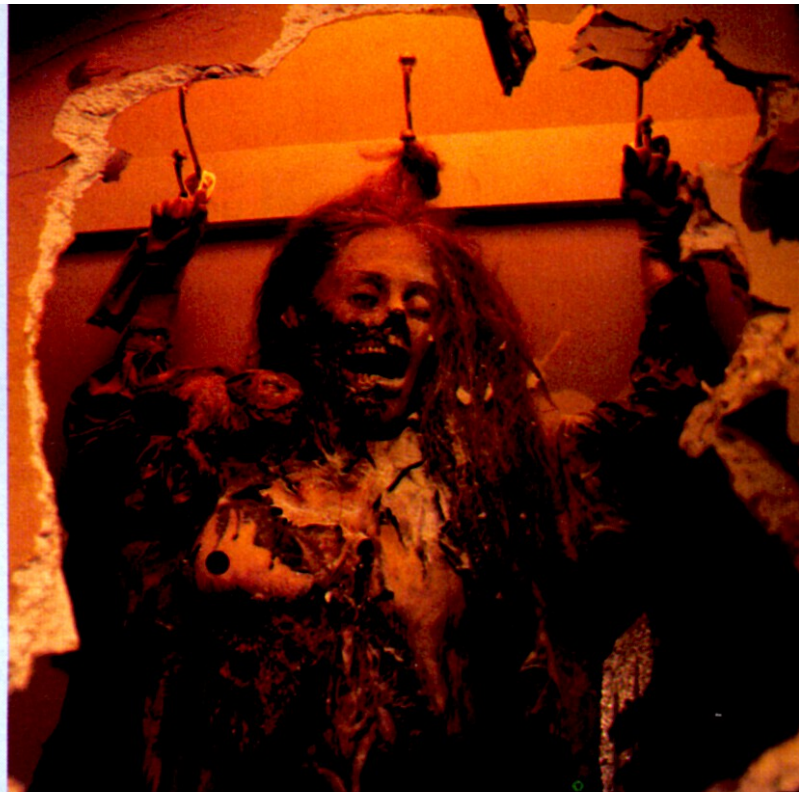
As soon as I was hired on the makeup effects side, I asked Dario if I could play a murderer. I believe the fans who go and see the movies containing my work view them as art exhibits. Seeing me *in persona* is an added embellishment."

The demented murderer played by Savini was lifted directly from the Poe story "Bernice." Said Savini, "This guy is a monomaniac. He sees a shadow and fixes on it. He's in love with his cousin because when she smiled one day he fixed on her teeth. Now she's dead and he wants the objects of his adoration."

For the scene Argento asked Savini to add a newspaper blowing gently in the wind on and off the corpse's face. "It's a simple touch," said Savini, "but it increases the subtle power of the effect enormously because you only glimpse flashes of mutilation."

The location used for filming is just a block away from Savini's Pittsburgh home. "I even have relatives buried here," he said. "But I feel like I'm in a foreign country with all these Italians around. There's no miscommunication, however. What Dario wants he can express with his face. He acts out everything, he's even hung himself in mime.

"Dario is wild, crazy, eccentric and brilliant," said Savini. "He doesn't shoot a story so much as create emotions. He makes the audience feel because



Savini's cat-ravaged corpse of Annabel for Argento's climax to "The Black Cat." Below: The clay prototype sculpted by Everett Burrell and Jerry Gergley. Said Savini of makeup effects work, "It's the only perishable art with a sell-by date."

he is the audience. He *liaises* with them and creates what he knows they want to see. Have you noticed how everyone on the crew is walking around clutching volumes of Poe stories? Dario forced us to rediscover one of our greatest writers working on this picture. We owe him a great deal for that."

Savini said he still gets excited creating makeup effects, work he called "the only perishable art with a sell-by date." None of his TWO EVIL EYES effects are particularly groundbreaking but Savini said he was glad he worked on Romero's MONKEY SHINES before attempting the puppet cats Argento needed for close-ups. "The monkey hair work held us in good stead for the cats' brown fur," said Savini. "The *piece de resistance* is an oversized mechanized cat's head with full articulation to make it blink, snarl, drop the jaw and furrow its brows. This will be used when Usher strangles the cat. Other fiberglass dummy cats were needed to give Dario enough room to swing one, throw it against walls, and cut it in half."

The American Humane Society, an animal rights group, got wind of the film and were disturbed to learn it contained a cat's torture by electrocution.



They were deciding whether to send a representative to investigate until Savini outlined exactly what his crew was doing, pointing out the electrocution scene had been cut.

The last scene in "The Black Cat" has mutant kittens feasting on Annabel's bricked-up corpse. "We designed these creatures as blind, undeveloped embryos," said Savini. "Fur can cover a multitude of defects but these had to be hairless to reveal veins under the skin. The claws and teeth were made bigger too, and their eyes made blank to suggest they were raised in the dark. This was all Dario's input. For Annabel's decomposed body we cast Madeleine [Potter] in clay and sculpted out a rotting chest area using anatomy books for reference." □

butions have included suggesting elements of Poe's "Ligeia" for the character of Potter's Annabel.

"Once I got this job, I read all the Poe stories again," said Gargaro. "It pulled Dario's script together for me very effectively. When I first read it, all I could see was the horror, but reading Poe, I realized how close it was structurally to the source material. I've pulled inspiration from many diverse stories to infuse the aciton with a well-rounded Poe sensibility."

One important central idea Gargaro and Argento discussed in relation to "The Black Cat" was non-Poe inspired, culled from Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. "Crime follows you wherever you go," said Gargaro of Argento's main theme. "Your destiny is to be paid back at some stage. At first the cat had a white patch on its stomach in the script. This was changed to a gallows, predicting Usher's death. Harvey [Keitel] is very concerned he's not perceived as a sicko. He doesn't strangle the cat because he's malicious. He does it because he knows it's wrong. Flaunt the laws of nature and you won't get away with it. If any movie has inspired Dario it's Hitchcock's *ROPE* with its set piece of 'bricked-up bodies behind a wall.' Dario wouldn't necessarily tell the actors his thoughts on this but I've done it for him to make them realize the basic integrity behind the film. That's my job as I see it.

"We are dealing with great literature here," continued Gargaro. "Poe was the originator of the short story format and he structurally carried biting metaphors through paragraphs. He was an intellectual although he wrote horror stories. The dark, romantic angst reflected his feelings about the world. But how intellectual can you get in a simple horror film? It must come down to action primarily with psychologically inspiring gestures thrown in for good measure. Dario comes from an intellectual standpoint and what he wants metaphorically hits you immediately. It was very easy therefore to discuss on the highest of levels what he was trying to achieve. We met on a



"I have the opportunity to explore the impulse towards perversity and depravity in the same way Dario is doing as a director," said Harvey Keitel. "He's a master of his art."



A desecrated corpse, robbed of its teeth, a plot idea Argento based on Poe's "Bernice," makeup by Tom Savini. Inset: Leaning on the headstone, admiring the objects of his affection, Savini in Poe guise for his role as the monomaniac who plunders his cousin's grave.

thematic plateau and have managed to stay there."

For that reason, Gargaro said he was moved by Argento's translated preface to an Italian collection of Poe stories (see page 37). "What Poe meant to Dario had a lot to do with what the film meant to me," said Gargaro. "I feel compelled to lead the actors to Dario's insights because they wouldn't necessarily find them themselves. Luckily the actors are willing to be led. The better the actor, the hungrier they are for input. Harvey [Keitel] is interested in detail. He said, 'Give me what you want. I'll absorb what is good and I'll give the best back.' He's a perfectionist like Dario and I've never been on a film set where such creative pathways have been so openly explored before. I may be the buffer between Dario and his cast but that doesn't mean he's ignoring the actors. He hired me to push them in the right direction; to answer the questions he couldn't articulate properly in English about the emotional intent of each scene."

Harvey Keitel is the biggest

star Argento has ever worked with, and one who has a reputation for not suffering fools gladly. Many of the crew were wary of even trying to come close. The actor came to Pittsburgh after co-starring with Jack Nicholson in *THE TWO JAKES*, ready to descend into the maelstrom of madness and terror of Usher's personal world: There's method in Keitel's madness though—method acting.

"The attraction of this script is it enables me to take a look at the forces within myself that may motivate me to do what Poe has his character doing," said Keitel. "If I can get in touch with those feelings it will be an education for me and the audience. I have the opportunity to explore the impulses towards perversity and depravity in the same way Dario is doing as a director. He's a master of his art and on that plane we come together. We both have something to offer each other."

According to Keitel there's a shortage of mainstream movies dealing with any kind of issue at all—the reason he said he

chose to be a part of *TWO EVIL EYES*, the first horror film he's ever made. "Poe deals with universal themes and Dario is addressing them in the context of what he's become justifiably famous for," said Keitel. "We all have the propensity towards depravity and perversity some time in our lives. It can be a struggle but we must all learn to do the right thing. I'm doing the right thing by appearing in 'The Black Cat' and highlighting the issue."

Lurking in the background at all times on "The Black Cat" is Argento's second unit director and personal assistant, Luigi Cozzi. Michele Soavi, director of *STAGEFRIGHT* and *THE CHURCH*, fulfilled this capacity for a few days until the air-conditioning at the William Penn Hotel caused his asthma attacks to increase and Cozzi was contacted as his urgent replacement. A director in his own right—*STAR CRASH* and *ALIEN CONTAMINATION*—Cozzi was in the middle of a new film when he got the telephone call to drop everything and get on a plane to Pittsburgh.

Cozzi and Argento have been friends for many years, since collaborating on the script for *FOUR FLIES ON GREY VELVET* (1972). Topping Cozzi's full agenda when he returned to Rome was overseeing the opening of Italy's first science fiction, horror and fantasy bookshop co-owned with Argento called—what else?—*Profondo Rosso* (*DEEP RED*, the title of one of Argento's best), located on the Via dei Gracchi. More than just a shop, Argento has turned the cellar into a Chamber of Horrors homage to his past work, using actual props to recreate key scenes from his films.

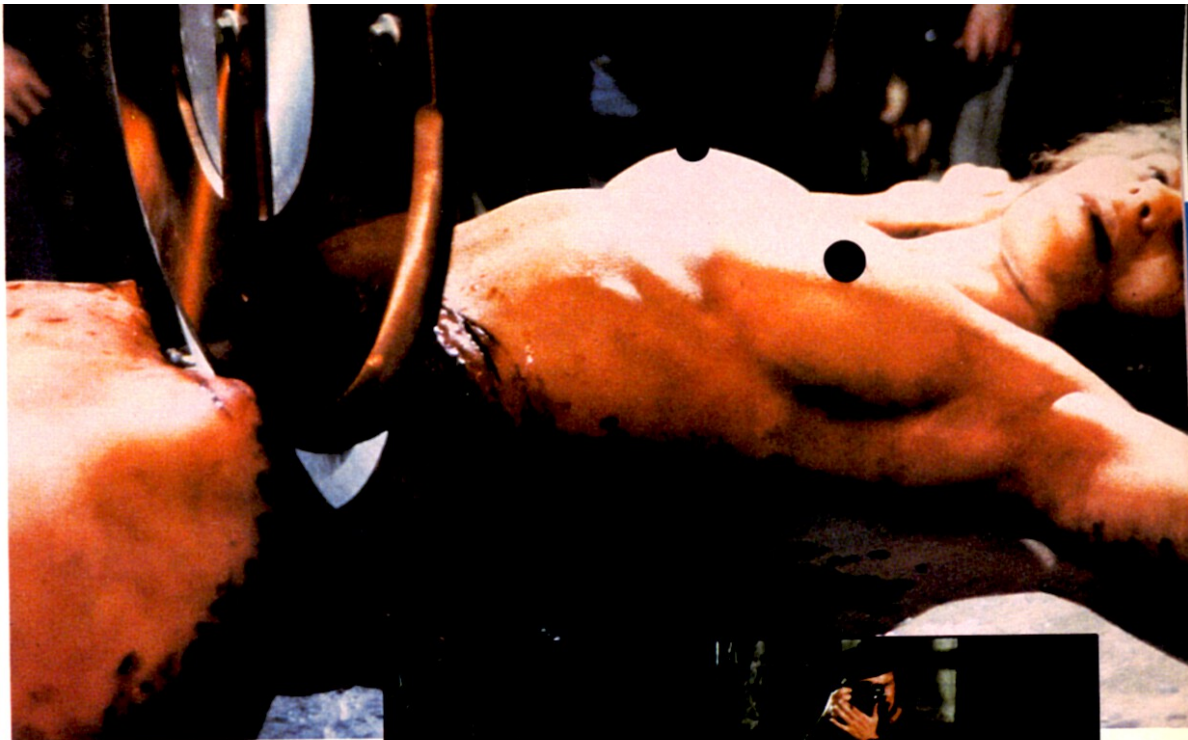
"I've done everything," said Cozzi about working for Argento on *TWO EVIL EYES*. "I've scouted locations, directed the Electronic Press Kit, raised his morale. I'm his general dogsbody. He's not the easiest person to work for as I'm sure many people have told you before me. You have to be a clairvoyant to foresee what he wants! I think being a close friend helps enormously. You have to know his taste, when he'll get angry, when he's not in

the mood. A professional couldn't do it. It's a strange job and, in truth, a strange relationship also."

Cozzi directed nine episodes of Argento's panned television game show *GIALLO*, and he reckoned *TWO EVIL EYES* represents a dream come true for Dario. "He's always been keen on Poe and filming in America," said Cozzi. "It's unknown territory so to speak, and it has been a thrilling voyage of discovery for him. He's done it all in Italy now and breaking into the American market is his goal. He has to get himself across internationally if his talent is to survive. Being a superstar in Italy is no longer enough for him. This film marks the most fantastic opportunity and he knows it. He's in the best mood I've seen him in for years because he feels at home and reassured. He was in a terrible state during *OPERA* [1987], and he was very nervous about coming to America, but that's all forgotten now."

Argento doesn't blink when asked if *TWO EVIL EYES* is his calculated attempt to enter the American market by riding on Romero's more high-profile coattails. "I don't know this at all," he said. "I wanted to make a Poe picture to exorcise my soul. Ever since *THE BIRD WITH THE CRYSTAL PLUMAGE* [1970] it has been my dream to base a film on Poe. It didn't have to be set in America. Poe's tales use

Savini's dummy of Harvey Keitel, used for the film's climax. Keitel took the role after filming *THE TWO JAKES*.



Setting up the blade for Argento's "Pit and the Pendulum" set piece, which has the camera swinging through the body's viscera. Inset: Harvey Keitel as crime photographer Rod Usher, taking pictures at the murder crime scene.

mainly European locations. Spain was suggested at one point, but I wanted the more contemporary urban appeal America had to offer. Nor is filming in America any different than being in Rome. The only real difference is the snack table. Perhaps American crews are more enthusiastic. Otherwise it's just the same."

Then on reflection, Argento added this observation about Romero: "There is a major difference between myself and George. He can never forget the pictures he's made in the past. I forget them instantly. I don't think George can, or wants to, forget the terrible time he had with *MONKEY SHINES*. If people don't like my films, then fuck them. George takes it far more personally than he needs to."

In the center of the Allegheny Cemetery on Pittsburgh's Butler Street an open coffin displays the body of a woman, with dental instruments fixed around her mouth, as a maniac played by makeup expert Tom Savini rips out her teeth. This sequence features a *CREEPERS*-like establishing crane shot swooping over trees, panning down a gravestone monolith, and ending as a close-up on Savini being dragged to a police car followed by Steadi-



cam operator Nicola Pecorini, who filmed the similar shot in *CREEPERS* (1985).

"I have a relationship with Dario that goes beyond being just his Steadicam controller," said Pecorini, who has worked with Argento since 1983, and on numerous films including *THE LAST EMPEROR*. "The more impossible the shot, the more it uses the lexicon of camera language, the better Dario likes it. He's the perfect director to work for because he knows what he wants and you're challenged to do it despite the problems. He hates wasting time and when he doesn't understand something, that's wasting it. His emotions are delicate but give him the atmosphere he wants and he's your friend for life."

Savini said he enjoyed acting for Argento and handling the makeup chores on both segments of the film. For his acting stint Savini said Argento was receptive to his ideas for the scene, culled from Poe's "Bernice." "I explained to

Dario that I'm wearing this big, baggy, beige, silk shirt and dark boots and being very romantic with the corpse. He said, 'Playa eet lika Hamlet.' For the scene, Savini wanted the corpse to wear a beautiful, white antique wedding dress discovered by costumer Barbara Anderson, and convinced Argento to use it in place of the black frock that was planned for.

Savini said he also found Argento receptive and easy to work with on effects concepts. "Dario has done wonderful effects in the past, especially on *OPERA*," said Savini. "He's worked extensively with effects people. We'd explain to him how an effect would work and he'd say, 'Oh. It's so clever!' One time he just turned and said to me, 'Your mind is like a volcano!'"

Actor John Amos makes his first appearance as LeGrand in the "Bernice" cemetery sequence. He must show Ushera a boxful of teeth and then ask him why, for the first time dur-



ing their association, he's showing signs of queasiness. The DIE HARD 2 star said he was seduced by the TWO EVIL EYES script for three reasons. "Dario Argento's work is renowned, I couldn't miss the chance of working with Harvey Keitel, one of my favorite actors, and Poe is classic American literature," said Amos. "I like the horror genre, especially the 'Elm Street' films, and I've read everything from Poe to Stephen King."

Amos has a rather spectacular death scene, one he said he's looking forward to filming. "I've only died in three pictures and I'm anxious to be covered in blood," he admitted. "Gore in movies doesn't bother me, especially when it's backed up with substance like it is here. Poe's brand of horror is more subtle and internalized. That's why he's one of my favorite authors. The horror of the mind is more traumatic than anything Dario could put on screen. But I bet he'll try, anyway!"

For his homage to Poe's "Pit and the Pendulum," Argento had a pendulum set constructed in the sub-basement cellar of the film's William Penn Hotel production base. The night before filming on the set, Argento was up on the hotel roof at midnight filming a lunar eclipse as added atmosphere for his segment. On the dark, dingy, damp set, a pendulum blade was constructed under production designer Cletus Anderson's supervision. Placed on a table directly beneath the blade is the severed body of a nude woman. The effect is extraordinarily grisly, and a few female members of the crew were visibly shaken by the realism. When Argento walked onto the set, he was quite taken aback and yelled, "Savini, you are a sadist!"

Remarked Savini, "I hired a stripper from a local bar and cast her naked. It's the first time I've made a body completely using gelatin. It looks more horribly realistic than I could ever have imagined. I'm amazed."

Madeleine Potter's reaction is more along the lines of total

"We aren't exactly pals who meet once a year in Hawaii to catch up on each other's social news," said Romero of Argento. "But we have a mutual respect for our individual talents."



Tom Savini's snarling cat puppet, a sop to the ASPCA not seen in the final film.

shock when confronted by the startling split torso image in the 100 degree heat, especially as Savini's team seemed to be paying more attention to perfecting the pubic area than anything else! "Haven't you boys got wives at home?" chuckled Savini. Potter knew she was making a horror film but it's evident she didn't quite realize how far Argento would go to achieve his aim. She did a good job masking her feelings, but didn't stick around for long because Keitel and Amos are the main characters in this murder discovery scene.

The pendulum structure consisted of a real blade and was therefore quite dangerous. Only those crew members who needed to be in close proximity were allowed near. Onlookers and dispensable technicians were cleared from the set in no uncertain terms by first assistant director Nick Mastandrea. The action being filmed centered on Amos nearly being killed by the pendulum when Keitel accidentally pulls the lever mechanism. Nicola Pecorini is setting up the "money shots" by attaching the Steadicam to the pendulum. In one of Argento's

more outrageous set pieces, the camera must swing through the split torso viscera as police extras rush into the shot trying to save Amos from sudden death. After a rehearsal, Argento changed the camera angle, and waited impatiently in the sweltering heat, clearly annoyed everything was taking so long.

Drinking Gatorade and mopping himself down with cloths dipped in Sea Breeze, supplied to everyone on set, Argento discussed his future plans. "ADC is not going to become the Hammer of Italy," he smiled. "I'm not a producer. I'm too busy to deal with money, banks and distributors. It's too commercial. Some people I will produce because they are friends with talent. Michele Soavi shoots a new film for me in May. Producing scares me and my first love is directing."

Harvey Keitel prepared for the scene by walking up and down the set with a camera around his neck to get used to the weight. Argento described the overriding thrust of the action with the words, "The blade must move, move, *move*." Then a magic moment occurred. Totally unrehearsed, Keitel

spontaneously skipped directly into the loose pendulum's path, snapping pictures, leaping out of the way just in time to avoid the back swing. The crew gave him a round of applause: he had put across Usher playing with death, the key aspect of his characterization, without saying a word. Argento was beside himself with glee.

But, alas, Keitel's acting heroics failed to make it into the film's final cut. Argento decided Keitel's improvisation brought too much humor to the scene. And in fact, Keitel, it was said, got on everybody's nerves during shooting by trying to add such extra bits to scenes all the time.

The film's "The Pit and the Pendulum" set became a hotel tourist attraction as the crew entered into a twelfth hour of trying to get the kinetic shots Argento deemed necessary to subject audiences to the full horror of the situation. The pendulum camera was tremendously effective on video playback and executive producer Claudio Argento viewed the proceedings with satisfaction, revealing why he wanted to be involved in his older brother's Poe project.

"Dario needed me because I knew about filmmaking on a global scale," said Claudio, who produced Alejandro Jodorowsky's SANTA SANGRE in Mexico. Claudio had nothing to do with either CREEPERS or OPERA, but in the interim between TENEBRAE and TWO EVIL EYES he said he noticed a welcome change in his brother's attitude. "The mature handling of his actors is the marked difference," he said.

Claudio doesn't have money invested in the production but was happy to be working with Dario again for the first time since their father Salvatore died. "We're family," he said. "We know everything about each other and I'm finding it a wonderful experience. Working with George [Romero] again is a delight and his name will greatly help the sales potential of the film outside Europe. TWO EVIL EYES has been perfectly structured and tailored for the market in my estimation. It represents a new international approach

TWO EVIL EYES

ROMERO ON ADAPTING POE

According to the director, the line between inspiration and a Poe rip-off is but a thin one.

By Frederick C. Szebin

Poe, Romero, Argento.

Three names synonymous with chills, suspense and mind-numbing horror. George Romero, America's Dead Master joined Dario Argento, Italy's Hitchcock, to make *TWO EVIL EYES*, a fond homage to the 19th century author who not only created the detective story, but established horror as a legitimate literary form.

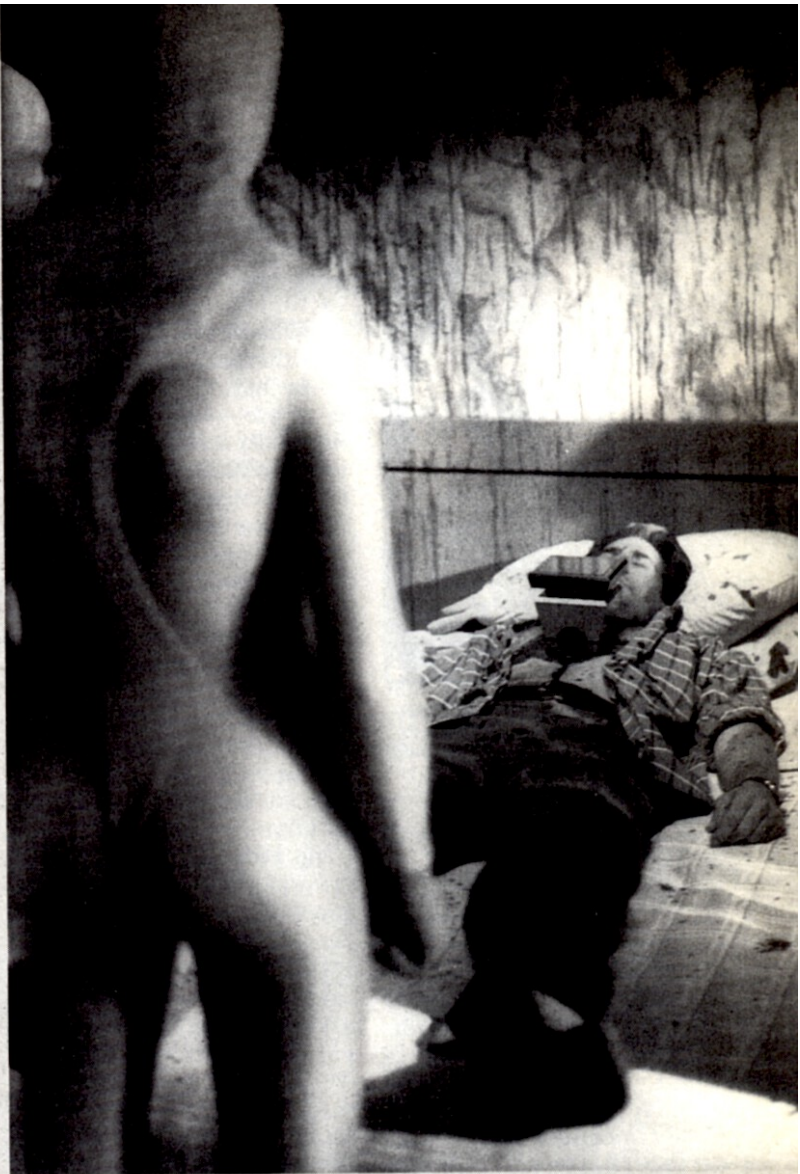
Romero was approached by Argento to help film a Poe-inspired anthology with the original intention of using four separate stories with four different directors at the helm. "We were talking to Stephen King, Tony Perkins, Stewart Gordon, John Carpenter and others," said Romero on the set of his installment. "It simply became too hard to schedule people. One day

Dario called me and said, 'Why don't we just do it ourselves. With two stories, we could have an hour apiece.' I said, 'Great. If you can make the deal, I'll be there.'"

Ultimately, Romero chose "The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar" as the Poe story he would film, casting *CREEPSHOW* veterans E.G. Marshall, Adrienne Barbeau and Bingo O'Malley, with handsome Ramy Zada as the hypnotist whose scientific curiosity about the "other side" leads to a horrific conclusion. At one point, according to makeup supervisor Tom Savini, Vincent Price was considered for a cameo role, a kind of homage that would have subtly linked the film to Roger Corman's Poe trilogy *TALES OF TERROR*, in which Price had played Valdemar.

"I always liked the Valdemar

Romero directs Bingo O'Malley as the living dead Ernest Valdemar goes after his conniving wife Jessica (Adrienne Barbeau) in Poe's "The Case of M. Valdemar."



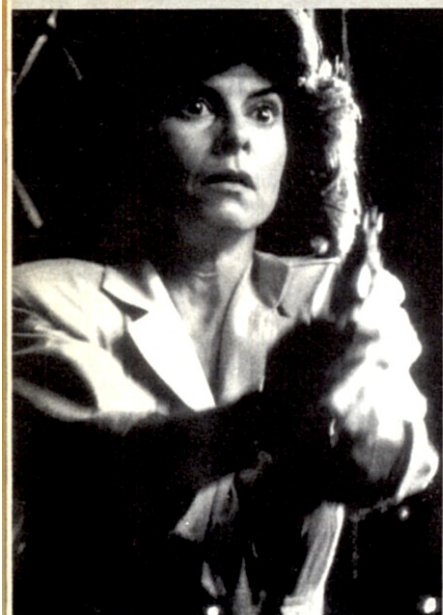
Apparitions from the "other side," seen only fleetingly in their Lycra body suits during lightning flashes, impale hypnotist Ramy Zada with his own metronome.

story," said Romero of his Poe selection, his second choice after Argento nixed his futuristic adaptation of "Masque of the Red Death." "It's not really a story, it's more of a premise, a headtrip. A lot of Poe is like that. It's just a neat idea. Poe was in the position to have a lot of neat ideas and have somebody print them."

Romero's segment emerged as less of an homage to Poe than Argento's. Said Romero, "As I was writing Valdemar, I had a few pangs of 'Gee, should I be more studious?' And when I read Dario's script—which is just such a love poem to Poe with references to many of his stories—I thought he was doing a much purer thing. I felt a little like I had been lazy. In Valdemar, I was inspired by a Poe idea." Romero laughed at that, and then added, "But it comes to a thin line between

that and a rip-off. I just made up a story that went with this premise. I wouldn't call it very Poe-like. I'm just making a movie based on an idea of Poe's."

For his aborted adaptation of "Masque of the Red Death," Romero had chosen a skyscraper in greater Pittsburgh as Prospero's latter-day castle, as a disease ravaged the outside world. When Donald Sutherland, slated to play Prospero, had to bow out of the film due to prior commitments, his departure contributed to abandoning the story and finding another. "When that fell through," said Romero, "I couldn't find any other stories other than ones that were too similar to Dario's, and there were so many. There are four tales where people get bricked up. I couldn't do any of them because Dario was doing one



Adrienne Barbeau as Mrs. Valdemar. "There is very little resemblance to [Poe in] what we're filming," she said.

of those."

In Poe's original tale, Valdemar is hypnotized at the point of death and communicates with his doctor, demanding to be awakened so he can die. When the spell is lifted Valdemar disintegrates into a melting pile of bone and rotting flesh. To make a cohesive script, Romero found the premise he needed in the greedy intentions of Mrs. Valdemar (Barbeau) and her young lover (Zada), who hypnotizes the dying Valdemar (Pittsburgh actor O'Malley) to gain control of his estate. Adding a touch of H. P. Lovecraft, Romero has Valdemar's death open a doorway for "the others" to enter into the living world.

Poe's slight plotting has crossed the decades to curse 20th century film actresses, such as Barbeau. "I read the story after we finalized the deal," said Barbeau on the set, as her nine-month-old son Kevin played in the background. "I went to the library and got the story, thinking I could find out about my character." Barbeau smiled. "There is a very little resemblance to [Poe in] what we're shooting," she said. "We're approaching it much more realistically. I don't know if you could call this horror. It's more of a thriller, but maybe I'm splitting hairs. I don't know what you would call a horror movie anymore."

Romero's naturalistic approach was in conflict with Argento's more designed, impressionistic manner of working. "We're completely different stylistically," admitted Romero. "I don't know how the two movies are going to fit together. This will be much more of a test than any of the other anthologies that have come before. His style and mine are—well, we could live on totally different planets. In this, I'm deliberately trying for a more steady, Hitchcockian feel. I shouldn't throw Hitchcock's name around so freely, but Valdemar is so tightly controlled that it comes across as a through-the-lens examination of what has happened. I'm not using any of the visceral stuff. It's a much subtler kind of thing this time. Dario is operatic in scale. This should be a very interesting film, like going to a double feature."

In 1979 Argento acted as Romero's co-producer on *DAWN OF THE DEAD*. "I don't think we could work together on the same film," said Romero of his long-time associate. "We just have different attitudes toward working. Very often I think we appreciate the same things, but I know I'm much too frivolous for him. I'm just not as well read as he is. I'm much more instinctive. He's more impressionistic. Many of his thoughts are based more in literary understanding. Dario is really a *maestro* in the classical sense. He takes it all incredibly seriously. I'm the other way. I love what I do and I love the medium. I'll go out and fight to get things a certain way, but when I'm doing the work, man, I'm having a good time."

For his segment of *TWO EVIL EYES*, Romero has adapted Poe by way of *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*. He threw himself into writing the script while at home in Florida. "I have a five-year-old daughter who doesn't understand that sometimes Daddy has to work all night and sleep all day," said Romero. "When I wrote Valdemar, I rented a house near where we live, bought a load of sandwich meat and wrote the script in four weeks."

In the makeshift basement

workshop of a posh Pittsburgh home, makeup supervisor Tom Savini and his crew, headed by Everett Burrell, John Vulich, Jerry Gergely, Greg Funk and Will Huff, turned O'Malley into the frozen, bullet-ridden corpse of Valdemar. In *CREEPSHOW* O'Malley portrayed with rodent-ish glee both Jordy Verrill's dead daddy and the doomed man's fantasy doctor.

"So this is what it's like to be dead," O'Malley commented midway through the four-hour makeup job. "I can do without it. Wearing the makeup is like being in a vise. I'm totally removed from it. I can't tell what's real and what isn't anymore."

Welcome to Savini-land, the affectionate title given the Pittsburgh-based workshop that has slaughtered countless teenagers, let loose horrendous beings from shadowy depths and liberated more limbs from more bodies than a particularly industrious minefield could hope for. Savini's masterworks of the macabre have been enthusiastically created with his inspirational cue, "Nothing is impossible. It's just a matter of working it out."

In Romero's script, Valdemar dies too soon for the legal papers to come through without suspicion. To keep the body "fresh," Barbeau and Zada put the old man in a freezer, where "the others" begin exerting their control. Savini's main concern was the old man's frozen look, a combination of mothball crystals, Aqua Gel and sparkly diamond dust suggested by set painter Eileen Carrigan.

The key to Valdemar's hor-

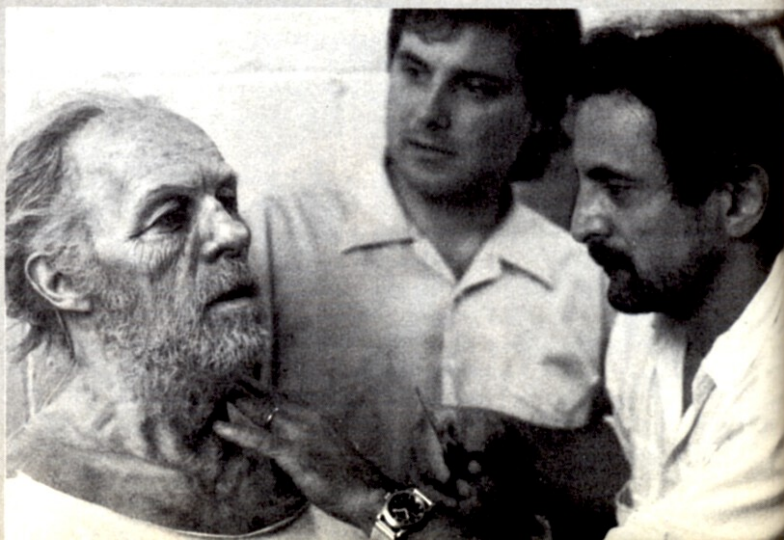
rific look, though, hinged on a peculiar powder called Zize, invented by Garry Zeller, who won an Academy Award for his pyro gels. Zize absorbs one hundred times its volume in water. When wet, the fine powder forms an ice-like solid Savini referred to as "a snowcone without the flavoring."

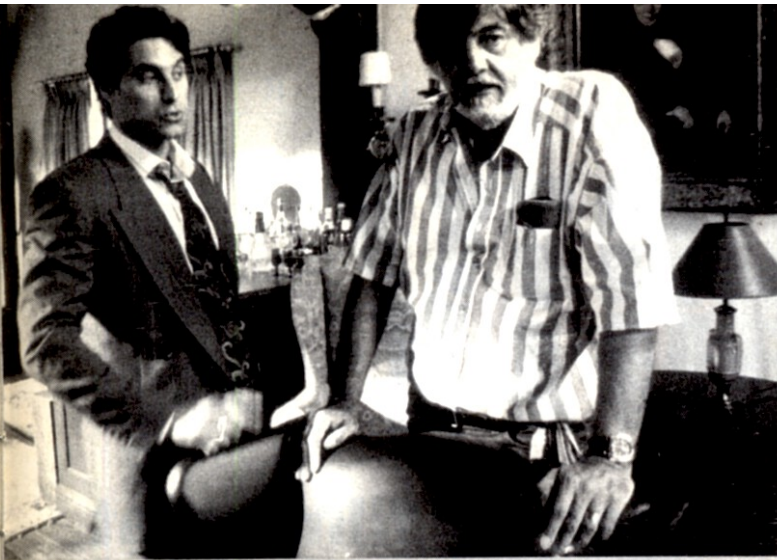
The last major step in Valdemar's prolonged demise is his total disintegration when "the others" leave his body, and he is found by the police some weeks later with his musculature collapsed on his skull. Savini achieved the effect with a false latex rendering of O'Malley wrapped around a fiberglass skull. A suction pump drew the latex face onto the skull. What Poe's story described as melted putrescence was added directly to the vacuum head to give Valdemar a three-week-dead look.

Another Savini effect involved Zada's Dr. Hoffman, when he gets his comeuppance for messing with the netherworld. "The others" shove the pointed end of the obelisk of Zada's hypnotic pendulum clock into his chest as Zada lies in bed, hypnotizing himself to sleep. For the effect, Savini devised a false chest, with Zada under the bed and attached at the neck, with his arms along the sides of the fake body.

Savini got a comeuppance of his own during a break in his lab when head assistant Everett Burrell decided to make use of a shipment of maggots to be utilized in Argento's segment. Knowing bugs to be the only chink in Savini's laid-back armor, Burrell insidiously

Tom Savini (right) and John Vulich make up Bingo O'Malley as Valdemar.





Romero directs Ramy Zada as the hypnotist who keeps Valdemar from dying.

stuck half a dozen of the little wiggles in his mouth and up his nose and paraded the feat before his disgusted employer. As coworker John Vulich explained, though, Savini was not so much a victim as an instigator getting his due.

"The squibs we use for body shots are pretty loud," said Vulich. "Tom gets us used to them by blowing us up in the shop. The bathroom explodes while you're sitting in there. Combat training. That's part of the charm of working for him. You never know."

TWO EVIL EYES gave Romero the opportunity to get back to work after Orion's poor handling of MONKEY SHINES (1988). Despite some of the best reviews of his career and his first opportunity since 1981's KNIGHTRIDERS to break from the horror genre, the film found itself against incredible odds after completion. "It was never going to do \$100 million, but if it had opened at the right time, MONKEY SHINES could have done CHILD'S PLAY-type business," said Romero.

Romero's plans to film APARTMENT LIVING, a comedy about a condo with a consciousness, were dropped when the production company, Saratoga Films, went bankrupt. The project is still a possibility, as is Romero's non-genre CUT NUMBERS, about low-level numbers runners. He refused to comment on his loss of PET SEMATARY, a project he had been developing with Stephen King since 1980. All he would say is he didn't

like the film very much, adding with a laugh, "I could piss some people off, so I better not say anything at all."

When TWO EVIL EYES came along, Romero jumped at the opportunity to adapt Poe. "I was always into the genre. Poe was one of the few genre authors I would be able to read as part of my school assignments. I reread him probably two, three times over the years. I would always buy the complete works whenever a pretty, new edition would come out. There seems to be a resurgence right now. I was in Florida when this project came up and I didn't have any of the complete works with me down there. I just wanted to read the stuff before I decided on Valdemar. I'd go into bookstores and get 'It's sold out,' 'No more' everywhere I went. They had copies on the shelves for years and all of the sudden they were selling them. I guess it's just that collective subconscious.

"For some reason, everybody's getting back into Poe," Romero continued. "I don't know if you can classify all the Poe films coming out now as a return to the classics. I've had a project in development at Columbia, TURN OF THE SCREW, for some time now and I can't sell it for beans. I don't think a resurgence is true with all the executives. Hollywood is more into this franchising right now. What are they up to, FRIDAY THE 13TH PART EIGHT? I get despondent because that's what the new genre of horror looks like to me." □

"Argento's style and mine are—well, we could live on totally different planets," said Romero. "This should be a very interesting film, like going to a double feature."



for the '90s."

The co-producer of TWO EVIL EYES is Achille Manzotti, the man responsible for backing major art works by Italian directors including the two Marcos, Bellocchio and Ferreri. Argento's anthology is a rare horror outing for Manzotti. His recent well-known "giallo" entry was Carlo Vanzina's NOTHING UNDERNEATH and his latest film is Peter Del Monte's BALLERINA, with CREEPERS star Jennifer Connelly. Argento joked, "Achille is a nice man with lots of money. He decided to go on vacation while we were filming in Pittsburgh and he asked me if I minded. 'Have a nice time,' I said. 'Bye Bye.' I couldn't wait to get rid of him so he would leave me alone!"

Manzotti sued Argento and his ADC company when TWO EVIL EYES fared less well in foreign sales than expected. The legal action followed the film's Italian opening and won't affect its U.S. debut, but has held up release in other foreign markets.

The soundtrack music for TWO EVIL EYES was scored by Pino Donaggio, formerly Brian DePalma's favorite composer. Argento had considered Stuart Copeland of The Police, as well as an existing composition by The Alan Parsons Project titled "Edgar Allan Poe." Said Argento, "Copeland called and said he was desperate to compose for me. He sent me a cassette of ideas along with some very strange pictures to whet my appetite."

After TWO EVIL EYES wrapped principal photography, Argento took a crew to Baltimore to film a brief travelogue around Poe's grave. This opens the movie and Poe's epitaph leads into Romero's seg-

ment, "The Facts in the Case of *Mister Valdemar*" on the Italian print, DUE OCCHI DIABOLICI, which runs 115 minutes. Minimal MPAA headaches for the film are forecast despite the "The Pit and the Pendulum" grisly murder aftermath which opens "The Black Cat." Romero's segment demonstrates his talents as a building block craftsman, but looks positively static compared to Argento's direction, which Argento feels is his best work since DEEP RED (1975).

Gone are the wilder excesses of Argento's past work. Argento's decision to embrace mainstream audiences who have so far resisted the ethereal nature of his empty but stylish visuals results in the most viciously commercial movie Argento has ever undertaken, calculated and tailored to appeal to the American mass market. Though Argento may have succeeded in reaching a wider audience, the result will surely prove to be a soul-searching litmus test for hardened Argento-philes. □

Argento, eyeing a camera angle.



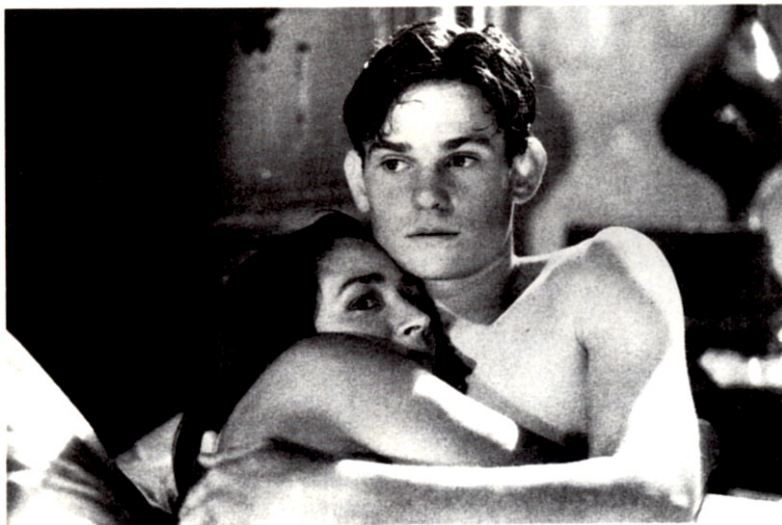
DEVIL FOUR

Norman Bates gets exhumed for filming at the opening of Universal Studios, Florida.

By Steve
Biodrowski

Just when you thought it was safe to return to the shower, Anthony Perkins reprises the role he likes to call "the Hamlet of Horror" in *PSYCHO IV*. Part sequel and part prequel, the script by Joseph Stefano, who adapted Robert Bloch's novel into the original Alfred Hitchcock film, finally portrays the origin of Norman Bates' psychosis, flashing back from a mental institution, where the incarcerated psycho has married his psychiatrist, to explore the relationship between Norman and his mother while she was alive. In some interestingly

Building the *PSYCHO* house in Florida, doubling as a theme park attraction after its use in filming the new sequel.



In the new installment to be telecast by Showtime cable in November, Henry Thomas of *ET* fame plays young Norman, shown in a clinch with mother Norma, played by Olivia Hussey.

off-beat casting choices, Henry Thomas (*E.T.*) portrays the younger version of Perkins' alter ego, and Olivia Hussey (the Virgin Mary in *JESUS OF NAZARETH*) assumes the role of Norma Bates. Warren Frost, who played a doctor in his son Mark's television series *TWIN PEAKS*, replaces the late Simon Oakland as Dr. Richmond.

PSYCHO IV was produced by George Zaloom and Les Mayfield, under the guidance of Hilton Green, producer of the previous sequels and assistant director on Hitchcock's original. Makeup effects, including a new version of Mother's corpse, were provided by Tony Gardner (*DARKMAN*). Mick Garris (*CRITTERS II*) directed the film, which will be cablecast on Showtime early in November with a video cassette release to

follow six months later. Theatrical distribution is planned for foreign markets.

After the boxoffice disappointment of *PSYCHO III* (1986), Zaloom and Mayfield, who had worked as production assistants on Part II (1983), brought an idea for another installment to Green, who encouraged them to pitch it to Universal executive Sid Sheinberg. "At that time, it contained some of the prequel elements," said Zaloom. "It was a take-off of *SPELLBOUND*, where Norman Bates gets stuck in this mental institution and has to hold down a role as a doctor, while a copycat killer on the outside is imitating his murders."

The pitch received an enthusiastic response, though not quite for the reason Zaloom and Mayfield hoped. "All of a sudden, Sid's face lit up, and

we thought we were doing great," Zaloom recalled. "And I guess we were, but in addition to that, Sid said he wanted to show us something and pulled out a big photo album with pictures of this swampland that looked like a bad real estate deal."

Zaloom was looking at plans for the new Universal Studio in Florida. Although the feature film department at Universal felt another *PSYCHO* sequel would not be a viable commodity at the boxoffice, Sheinberg wanted exactly such a high-profile production to be the first one shooting on his Florida lot when the studio opened its tour. Consequently, the project was moved to Universal's television department, where Tom Thayer put together the deal with Showtime. Three months later a new Bates Motel was built in Florida from the blueprints of the original.

The script went through a few abandoned drafts before Stefano was hired to turn the project into more of a prequel. Said Zaloom, "We had some ideas in the beginning that Norman kept flashing back to his childhood, and those seemed to be some of the best parts of the story. We got the idea of using Joe Stefano, told him we had an idea for a prequel, and Joe said, 'I've always wanted to do a prequel to *PSYCHO*.'"

Added Green, "There's not much more you can do with the Norman Bates concept. There's not the surprise anymore of



Anthony Perkins returns in the role he created for Alfred Hitchcock, now locked up in a mental institution while a copycat killer recreates his crimes on the outside.

who's doing it. After *PSYCHO III*, we felt basically the audience is ahead of us. The prequel idea was a way to show something new about Norman—and, more importantly, about Norman's mother, whom we've only seen as this corpse for all these years." Lest fans of Anthony Perkins worry that his role has been reduced to a cameo framing device, the producers point out that the film will be equally divided between Perkins and the flashbacks.

After directing *CRITTERS II* and writing the original drafts of *FLY II*, director Garris said he was reluctant to get involved in another sequel. "I had been saying, 'No more movies with numbers on the titles,'" said Garris, who was developing *SHE-WOLF OF LONDON* as a television series for MCA (Universal's parent company) when he learned of the new *PSYCHO* sequel. "I didn't want to do another sequel until I read the script—it's intelligent, fascinating, sick, and appealing on all those levels. I campaigned for it. John Landis really wanted me to do it, so he called Hilton [Green], Tony Perkins, and MCA." In return, Garris cast

"In 1960, nothing had shocked people as much as *PSYCHO*," said new sequel director Mick Garris. "To go that far beyond the norm in 1990 is, I think, impossible."

Landis in a cameo role. Also popping up in roles are Green as the mayor of Fairville, Zaloom as an orderly in a mental hospital, and Garris himself as a fireman.

Of course, directing a sequel to the most famous film made by the world's most famous director is a formidable task, but Garris felt buffered by the existence of two previous sequels. "That question started coming up in interviews, and I'd never stopped to think about it before," said Garris. "People would say, 'What do you think about stepping into Hitchcock's shoes?' and I'd think, 'Oh, shit! I am, aren't I?' But really the only way to approach this movie is on its own terms. You can't do the same thing again. There is the occasional homage—this is a *PSYCHO* movie—but it's a

different style. The look isn't even remotely similar except for the set design. This is more sexually oriented than *PSYCHO*.

"There is no question that having two sequels before made it a lot easier. *PSYCHO II* would have been far more intimidating. Parts II and III are fun. Tony would kill me if I said this, but III is a little bit campier—his performance was definitely a campy approach. This is very straightforward and serious. It's more disturbing in a deeper sense. It's much more somber. It's the least humorous of the *PSYCHO* films—I hope."

Of course, thirty years later, it is impossible to have the same impact as the original, especially when one considers the far more graphic nature of current horror fare. "In 1960,

nothing had shocked people as much as *PSYCHO*," said Garris. "To go that far beyond the norm in 1990 is, I think, impossible. So the approach we took was to go after what's psychologically disturbing. This is a film about people. It's not about slashing so much as about what led to the slashing that took place in the original *PSYCHO*. That's what appealed to me: trying to maintain a level of tension. There are only three big murder scenes in this picture, and they're shocking if not particularly graphic."

According to Garris, the onus of being in yet another sequel to *PSYCHO* initially scared off some potential cast members. "A lot of people just thought, 'Oh, *PSYCHO IV*'—until they read the script. A well-known actress we had in mind as Norma turned us down. Apparently, she hadn't read the script yet, because she called us back the next morning and said, 'I would love to do it,' but it was too late."

Henry Thomas was cast because of his remarkable resemblance to a young Anthony Perkins. Avoiding the

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FLESH GORDON AND THE

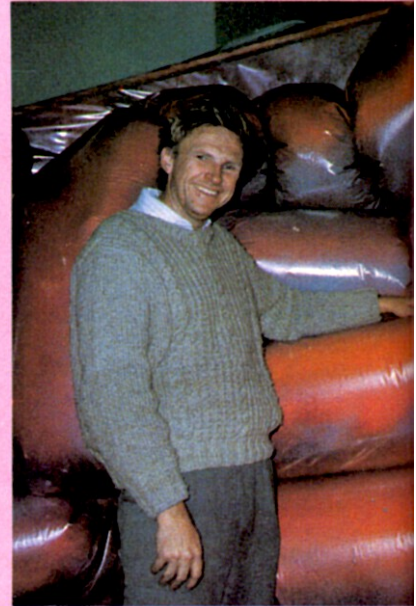
Ambitious low-budget visual effects grace

By Sue Uram

The charm of the original FLESH GORDON (1972) was found in its imaginative special effects, realized by a group of talented newcomers, including Dennis Muren, who went on to do STAR WARS and become one of the founders of ILM. The sequel, FLESH GORDON MEETS THE COSMIC CHEERLEADERS, due out this fall, seeks to capture that same appeal. The film's ambitious, low-budget effects are the work of the FX Center, an umbrella group of visual effects specialists based in Livonia, Michigan, many of whom worked on MOONTRAP (20:4:48).

The sequel is directed and co-written by Howard Ziehm, who co-produced, co-directed and photographed the original, which grew from a low-budget porno film into a mainstream hit. Reportedly filmed for under \$1 million—the filmmakers claimed a budget of \$3.6 million—Ziehm wrapped principal photography in October of 1989 after ten months of on-again, off-again shooting. Vancouver-based producer Maurice Smith, who raised the financing, has sold the film in Great Britain, France and Japan, and said he would self-distribute it here if there were no takers for the U.S. market.

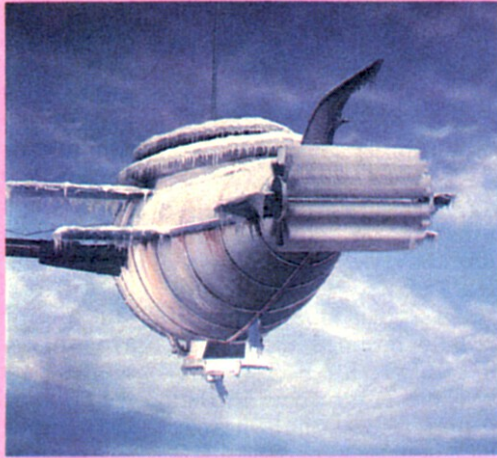
Without "exposing" too much of the plot, suffice it to say that Flesh encounters not only the Cosmic Cheerleaders but also the deadly Ass-teroids and King Dong, who has a unique way of fending off attackers from his Empire State Building-like perch. Ziehm scripted the sequel with Douglas Frisby, picking up where the original left off. Flesh Gordon is played by Canadian kick-boxing champion Vince Murdocco. Robin



Director Howard Ziehm with the intestines of the Turd Village, during live action filming in Vancouver.



Above: Flesh Gordon battles the Slime Monster, stop-motion animation by Larry Larson, composited with front-projection live action. Right: A motion-controlled, pole-mounted Blimp Ship flies serenely above Queen Frigid's Ice Planet. Below: The Titt ship of the Cosmic Cheerleaders encounters the deadly Ass-teroids, wire-rigged action filmed live against hanging, forced perspective miniatures, with reflective paint on black for the stars.



Kelly appears as Dale Ardour. And back is William Hunt to reprise his role as Emperor Wang. Hunt co-wrote the original and is the only actor to return. "We couldn't find anyone else from the original movie to ask," said Ziehm.

FX Center project manager Ed Wollman said the ambitious effects envisioned by Ziehm for the film involved "about six months work." FX Center designed the shots in 250 storyboards, illustrating some fifty optical effects, twelve matte composites, 35 laser effects, 95 motion-control shots, and forty to fifty stop-motion cuts, work involving the construction of four major landscapes, fifty detailed models and seventeen miniature spaceships. "It's harder to do a funny effect than a technical effect," said Wollman. "You have to make the models art and exude charm."

Tom Hitchcock designed the visual effects for FX Center and devised the obviously

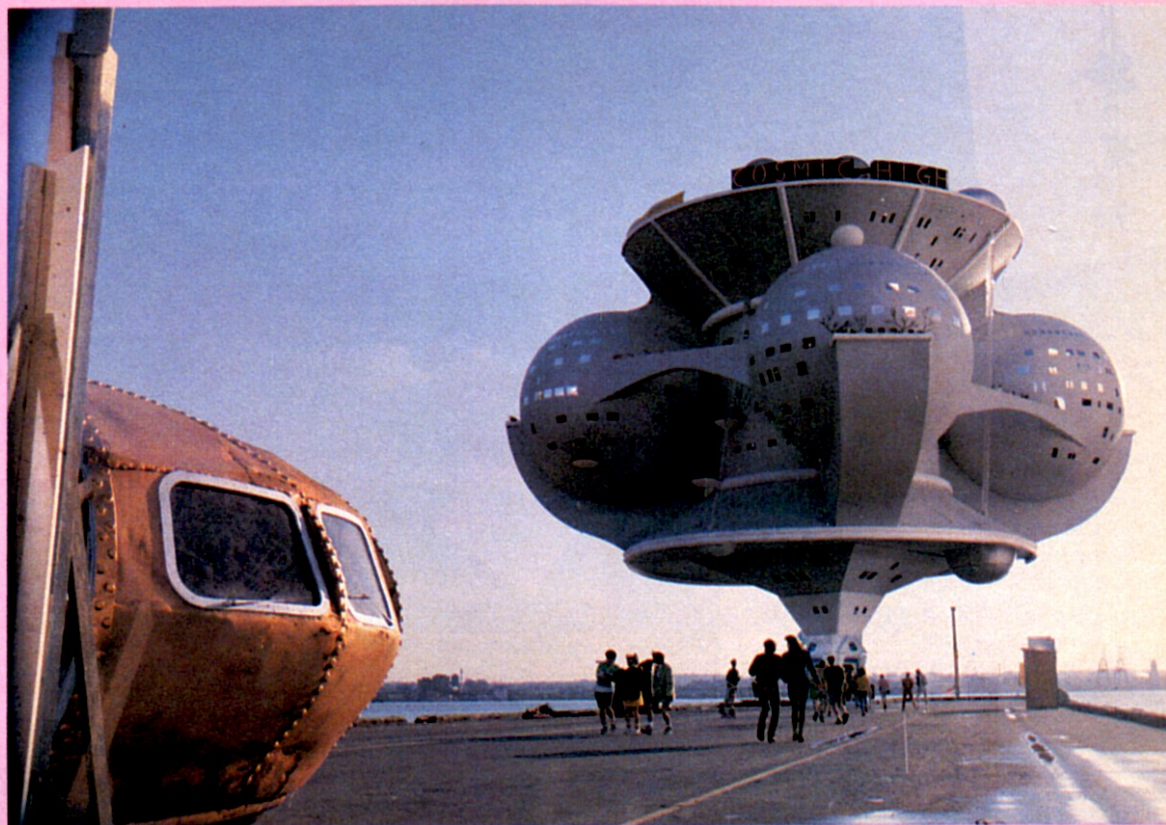
COSMIC CHEERLEADERS

this porno sequel in search of an R-rating.

symbolic spaceships and backgrounds. Ships used ranged from photographic cut-outs to five-foot, fifty-pound scale models. Bob Kayganich painted the mattes, while David Wogh of Acme Special Effects supervised physical effects on set, such as spewing volcanoes. Larry Larson of Miracle Motion animated the stop-motion creatures, including the Green Monster, Dick Head, and King Dong. Jake Jacobson of Entertainment Engineering and Dave Hettmer of Phantasy Visual Effects rigged, lit and photographed all the creations. Jacobson used "in-camera" compositing techniques rather than blue screen for reasons of both quality and economy. Spaceships were wire-rigged, manipulated against black velvet. Hettmer estimated the group completed about one shot per day.

Producer Maurice Smith said the original FLESH GORDON cost just \$25,000 to make. With far more money spent on the sequel, Smith said somewhat facetiously that he hoped for a corresponding jump in the boxoffice gross, which he estimated at \$65 million for the original. (*Variety* lists film rentals of \$5,300,000). Smith also plans to pick up the distribution rights to the original film, which he said expire this year, to promote both films on a double bill release.

A big problem could be obtaining the R-rating needed for wider marketing. Ziehm said the sequel is more "slap and tickle" soft porn, with a focus on the effects to give it a science fiction connection. Since the film is a comic parody, Smith said he hoped to sneak the film's porn aspect past the censors. Quipped Smith about his strategy for getting an R, "Pray to the East." □



Imagination and economy, effects by the FX Center of Livonia, Michigan. Above: Cosmic High, a hanging model, shot live action with a foreground miniature of the Cheerleader's Titt ship, yet to be enhanced with a matte painted background. Below: King Dong, a mechanized model by Jim Towler, displays a unique defense for the Cheerleaders' wire-rigged attack.

the Witches

Roeg brought his distinctive touch to the magic of Jim Henson's last puppet fantasy.

By Alan Jones

THE WITCHES is director Nicolas Roeg's best reviewed film since DON'T LOOK NOW, acclaimed when released last year in Great Britain as "delightful" and "enchanting." Here Warner Bros gave the film its belated nationwide opening August 17, at last giving U.S. audiences the chance to enjoy the puppet fantasy swan song of late Muppet producer Jim Henson. THE WITCHES turns out to be Roeg's most accessible film in more than a decade, yet it still showcases the creative quirks and uncompromising style that has made Roeg a unique

Huston peels off her face to reveal she is actually the Grand High Witch, makeup by Henson's Creature Shop.



Roeg on the set with Anjelica Huston as the sinisterly beautiful Miss Ernst.

and controversial industry figure.

Roeg's involvement in the \$10 million Lorimar production began while he was shooting TRACK 29 (1988) in North Carolina. Duncan Kenworthy, producer of Henson's THE STORYTELLER television series asked if Roeg would like to direct an episode. "But the tale I was interested in was quickly snapped up by someone else," said Roeg. "Then I found out my old friend, partner and scriptwriter, Allan Scott, was preparing a screenplay of Roald Dahl's 'The Witches' for the company." Scott has written Roeg's DON'T LOOK NOW (1973), as well as his latest psychological thriller COLD HEAVEN. Roeg asked Scott if he could read THE WITCHES script as a favor.

"I knew about the story because I liked Dahl's work,"

said Roeg. "I read it, was impressed, and let my interest be known." At the time Henson was having difficulty finding a director who could bring a wholly original idiosyncratic quality to the project. Hearing about Roeg's overture, a director whose work he admired, Henson's hurdle suddenly vanished.

Because Roeg considers all of his movies atypical, he disqualified the description of THE WITCHES as just a children's film or a strange career choice. "None of my movies are typical and how my mind works is given away totally by my films," said the director of such cult items as PERFORMANCE (1970) and THE MAN WHO FELL TO EARTH (1976). "For that reason Dahl's ideas fascinated me. I have two young boys [by his wife, actress Theresa Russell],

and it opens up a whole new life when you have to read them bedtime stories. You realize what's a good yarn and what isn't. It also turns you on to other things in the way that the best kids' stories do.

"THE WITCHES was a strong adventure dealing with basic emotions. You tend to think you lose those emotions as you get older but you don't. That's why the film can be appreciated by adults on higher levels. THE WITCHES didn't strike me as simple comic book stuff but a really great story about facing up to life and how we can all triumph over adversity. I was intrigued by the challenge of how exactly I would put that message across in the guise of a fairy story."

Starring PARENTHOOD juvenile Jasen Fisher, Mai Zetterling, Anjelica Huston and comedian Rowan Atkinson, THE WITCHES revolves around a diabolical scheme to transform the children of Britain into mice by spiking candy with a magic potion. How Fisher averts the impending infanticide is told mainly from his mouse-eye point-of-view, seen in Roeg's clever camera angles.

With locations in Norway and Newquay, the film began its twelve-week shoot on April 11, 1988, at Bray Studios, the former Hammer House of Horror. Halfway through production, Lorimar was bought out by Warner Bros, but according to Roeg, this didn't affect the schedule at all. "We





Animatronic mice created for the film by Jim Henson's Creature Shop. Left: Children turned into mice by the witches hide in a bowl of fruit. Above: After defeating Huston, the mouse hero in a doll house provided by his grandmother.

were well into the film by then and part of the deal with Warners was it would go ahead as planned," said Roeg. "The problems arose afterwards, of course, because it wasn't their initiated product and they didn't know what to do with it. They still don't. All enthusiasm vanished as it went on the back burner."

Roeg shot all the live-action footage in the first seven weeks and the complex special effects in the remaining five. John Stevenson, Henson's Creature Shop supervisor, had his team build three different sizes of mice: a lifesize version, another three times bigger, containing intricate cable controls, and a hand puppet nine times larger for close-up expressions. The sophisticated animatronics work didn't faze Roeg, however.

"I've done a lot of special effects stuff in my time," he said. "It's interesting and there's always something new to learn. It was wonderful having the Creature Shop available to us and the people were marvelous to work with. I didn't see much of executive producer Henson though, because they were subcontracted through Lorimar."

Apart from the coup of casting director Zetterling, signal-

ing her return to acting after a fifteen-year absence, *THE WITCHES* features a superbly over-the-top performance by Huston as the dressed-to-kill, evil Miss Ernst. "She was marvelous," enthused Roeg. "She took her glamorous part to the very edge but still kept the dark reality. I wish I could take credit for it, but I only offered suggestions. She played it exactly the right way."

The unrelenting tone of *THE WITCHES* bothered Warner Bros during post-production and preview screenings. Dahl's original ending, which Roeg said he never filmed, has Fisher spending the rest of his life as a mouse. The movie has good witch Jane

Horrocks suddenly appear to make Fisher human again. Roeg insisted the awkwardly upbeat ending wasn't a sudden decision.

"The ending as it stands was always being mooted very early on," said Roeg. "You can track the white witch's motives back through the plot. Dahl expressed his unhappiness about this and with the film in general. But as I told him, movie-making is a different medium. It's all right when you are reading the book to a child because you can rationalize it if it seems to be distressing their imagination. But in transferring it from page to screen, you can't go around to every child in the audience and explain

what your intentions are. Dahl's ending on screen would have been painful to the spirit of the book.

"Dahl told me he gets letters all the time from children who say they've been scared by his tales. He always writes back saying it's only a story. That's the end of it as far as he's concerned, but I had to bear that responsibility and keep it in mind."

The fact that *THE WITCHES* has turned out to be Roeg's most commercial picture in years doesn't seem to concern him. "Commercial is a difficult word for me to understand," he said. "I'm happy *THE WITCHES* is getting across to a wider audience, but I don't make mainstream movies. I direct only those films I want to make. I'm offered studio movies all the time but I haven't felt the need to do them. They're fucking hard work and tie you up for years. The hardest part of *THE WITCHES* experience was staying within the tight budget. We all worked very long, laborious hours because we didn't have a choice. Time and money were of the essence. But if people feel they have lost themselves back in their childhood for a short time with *THE WITCHES*, then it was worth the effort." □

Roeg with executive producer Henson (left) and producer Mark Shivas (center).



FILM RATINGS

ARACHNOPHOBIA

Directed by Frank Marshall. Touchstone, 7/90, 103 mins. With: John Goodman, Jeff Daniels, Julian Sand.

Frank Marshall, an ace second unit director and executive producer on numerous Spielberg vehicles, presents a promising debut as the director of the best spider-themed film ever made. Admittedly, that's not saying much. Marshall knows how to make the audience's skin crawl with creepy critter effects and provides some welcome humor as well. Plot has a cameraman in South America being bitten by a deadly and unknown venomous spider, which hops a ride in his coffin back to the States. Likable Jeff Daniels is the young doctor trying to set up practice in a small town who has an intense fear of spiders and who gets blamed for the initially mysterious spider deaths. A tarantula tarantella—you can't think about it but it's got a good beat.

•• Dennis K. Fischer

BRIDE OF RE-ANIMATOR

Directed by Brian Yuzna. Taurus Entertainment, 11/90. With: Jeffrey Combs, Bruce Abbott, Claude Earl Jones, Fabiana Udenio.

Brian Yuzna, producer of the original RE-ANIMATOR, has tinkered a sequel together out of leftover characters, parts and a few original notions. Back are Jeffrey Combs as Dr. Herbert West and Bruce Abbott as assistant Dan Cain, continuing their experiments by creating a "bride" with the heart of Cain's lost love. Italian beauty Francesca Udenio serves as the standard horror heroine, providing a new love interest for Cain and screaming at things a lot. West amuses himself by making up odd combinations of body parts, such as an eyeball attached to five fingers or a combination arm and leg. Unfortunately, the potpourri of surrealistic effects represents the only real creativity that went into making the new film. Yuzna's scenes are often flat and ineffective in building tension or fright. The film tries to be humorous, but lacks the touches that sent Stuart Gordon's original over the top. It all emerges as a dull, unmemorable sequel to one of the best horror films of the '80s, lacking in focus, themes and screams.

• Dennis Fischer

DARKMAN

Directed by Sam Raimi. Universal, 8/90, 96 mins. With: Liam Neeson, Frances McDormand, Larry Drake.

Director Sam Raimi consis-

FILM TITLE	●●●●		●●●		●●		●		○			
	MUST SEE	EXCELLENT	GOOD	MEDIOCRE	POOR	SB	VJB	FSC	DG	JPH	BK	DS
AKIRA /Katsuhiro Otomo Akira Com., 4/90, 124 mins.			●●●		●●●●						●●●	●●
ARACHNOPHOBIA /Frank Marshall Buena Vista, 7/90, 103 mins.			●	●●	●	●●	●	●	●	●	●	●●●
BACK TO THE FUTURE III /Robert Zemeckis Universal, 5/90, 120 mins.			●●	●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
CLASS OF 1999 /Marc Lester Taurus Ent., 5/90, 98 mins.			●●	●	●●						●	●●
THE COOK, THE THIEF... /Peter Greenaway Miramax, 3/90, 120 mins.			●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●		●●	●●
DARKMAN /Sam Raimi Universal, 8/90, 95 mins.				●●●	●●●	●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●
DICK TRACY /Warren Beatty Buena Vista, 6/90, 120 mins.			●	●●●	●●●	●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●
DUCK TALES: THE MOVIE /Bob Hathcock Buena Vista, 8/90, 73 mins.				●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
EXORCIST III /William Peter Blatty Fox, 8/90, 110 mins.			●●●	●●	●●●●	○	●	●	●	●	●●	●●
FLATLINERS /Joel Schumacher Columbia, 8/90, 111 mins.			●	●	●●	●	●	○	●	●	●	●●
GHOST /Jerry Zucker Paramount, 7/90, 127 mins.			●●●	●●	●●				●●	●●	●●	●●●
GHOST DAD /Sidney Portier Universal, 6/90, 84 mins.				●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	●
GREMLINS 2: THE NEW BATCH /Joe Dante Warner Bros, 6/90, 105 mins.			●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●	●	●●●	●●●	●●●
THE GUARDIAN /William Friedkin Universal, 4/90, 98 mins.			●●●	●●	●●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○
HENRY... /John McNaughton Maljack, 9/89, 83 mins.			●	●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●	●●●●
HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER /John McTiernan Paramount, 3/90, 107 mins.			●●●	●●	●	●●●	●	●	●	●	●	●●●
JETSONS: THE MOVIE /Hanna/Barbera Universal, 6/90, 82 mins.				○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
JUNGLE BOOK /Wolfgang Reitherman Buena Vista, 7/90 (re-issue), 78 mins.			●●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●●
PROBLEM CHILD /Dennis Dugan Universal, 7/90, 81 mins.				○	●●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
ROBOCOP 2 /Irvin Kershner Orion, 6/90, 118 mins.			●	●●●	●●●	●	●	●	●	●	●●	●●
SANTA SANGRE /Alejandro Jodorowsky Expanded Ent., 2/90, 118 mins.			●●●	●●●	●●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
SPACED INVADERS /Patrick Read Johnson Buena Vista, 4/90, 100 mins.				●	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○
TALES FROM THE DARKSIDE: THE MOVIE /John Harrison Paramount, 5/90, 93 mins.			●	●●	●	○	○	○	○	○	○	●●
TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES /Steve Barron New Line, 3/90, 93 mins.			●	●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●	●●
TOTAL RECALL /Paul Verhoeven Tri-Star, 6/90, 109 mins.			●●●	●●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●●●
THE WITCHES /Nicholas Roeg Warner Bros, 2/90, 95 mins.			●●●	●●●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●●●

SB/Steve Biodrowski VJB/Vincent J. Bossone FSC/Frederick S. Clarke DG/Dann Gire
JPH/Judith P. Harris BK/Bill Kelley DS/Dan Scapperotti

tently shoots himself in the foot here by including preposterous and outrageous bits that utterly snap any pretense of credibility. Peyton Westlake (Liam Neeson), scientific researcher of synthetic skin, undergoes a PHANTOM OF THE OPERA-like scarring at the hands of some thugs. Doctors cut his pain nerve endings, leaving him with sometimes overpowering rage and superhuman strength. With synthetic skin that lasts only 99 minutes, Westlake can imper-

sonate anyone (even altering his size and body bulk when necessary). It's a stew that has potential but is sabotaged by Raimi and his cadre of writers (Chuck Pfarrer, Ivan Raimi, Daniel and Joshua Goldin) throwing in one credibility-shattering element after another. Ultimately, the audience can no longer willingly suspend its disbelief. Instead of a story, we are left with a freak show, some wonky camera angles and explosive effects shots.

• Dennis Fischer

DEF BY TEMPTATION

Directed by James Bond III. Troma, 6/90, 95 mins. With: James Bond III, Bill Nunn, Kadeem Hardison, Cynthia Bond.

Spike Lee's sexual come-ons pick up the Beast in this engagingly weird thriller from first-time director James Bond III, an alumnus of Lee's SCHOOL DAZE and DO THE RIGHT THING. Hot studs are drawn to a foxy, young thing at a bar, only to discover a succubus upon hitting the sack with Temptation (Cynthia Bond). Infesting her victims or devour-

ing them whole, this "hot-natured freakazoid" is a beautiful embodiment of the AIDS virus, sexual abstinence the only weapon against her evil lust. The film treats its bizarre parable with just the right amount of goofball humor and reverence, going far above its hip-hop soundtrack and blaxploitation trappings with incredible images of fog-shrouded creatures and man-eating televisions. But too often the characters launch into rambling metaphysical speeches. It takes a hallucinogenic climax to really deliver the message, as a nerdy divinity student uses a blazing crucifix to fight off his demonic libido.

•• Daniel Schweiger

DUCK TALES: THE TREASURE OF THE LOST LAMP

Directed by Bob Hathcock. Buena Vista, 8/90, 74 mins. Voices: Alan Young, Christopher Lloyd, Rip Taylor.

With animated films enjoying a long overdue renaissance, producers are mining the wastelands of TV's popular cartoon shows for boxoffice gold. Scrooge McDuck, Indiana Jones with feathers, and nephews Huey, Dewey and Louie set off in search of a lost treasure, stalled by booby traps, a pit of mutated scorpions and, taking a misguided cue from Spielberg's THE TEMPLE OF DOOM, a sleazy and buffoonish East Indian henchman of a lead villain, Merlock. Filmed under Disney's Movietoon (read limited animation) banner, this has the pace and vivid colors to keep young audience members sufficiently amused, but should fade from memory as quickly as last week's vanilla ice cream cone.

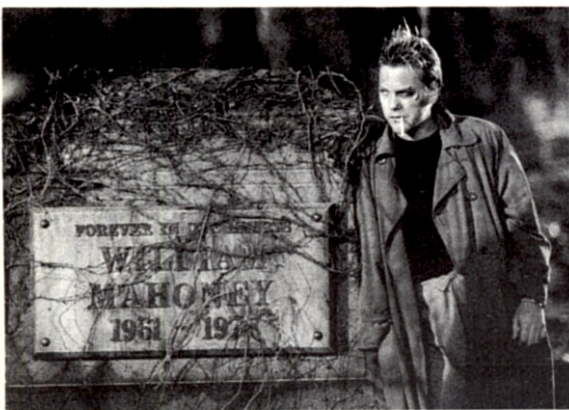
• Vincent Bossone

ELVES

Directed by Jeff Mandel. A.I.P., 6/90, 89 mins. With: Dan Haggerty, Deanna Lund, Julie Austin, Borah Silver.

A slasher movie, with an Elf (an unconvincing, rubbery puppet created by Vincent J. Guastini) as the slasher. He's one of those helpful serial killers who leave an easy-to-trace rune as a signature at each murder site. There's a major hard-to-swallow subplot involving a plan by present-day Nazis to give birth to the anti-Christ by impregnating an inbred Colorado virgin (Julie Austin) using the Elf. Guastini's makeup is photographed so poorly by Ken Carback, it really makes you appreciate the artistry of the Muppets, which always seem absolutely

FILM RATINGS



Kiefer Sutherland confronts ghosts from the past in **FLATLINERS**.

believable in their surroundings. Although the Elf has no discernible genitals, it apparently manages to impregnate Austin, as a fetus is shown under the closing credits, the prelude to an undeserved sequel. **o Judith P. Harris**

THE EXORCIST III

Directed by William Peter Blatty. 20th Century Fox, 8/90, 110 mins. With: George C. Scott, Jason Miller, Nicol Williamson, Brad Dourif.

Yes, III is better than II, but not as good as I. William Peter Blatty's long-awaited horror sequel is packed with more Catholic iconography than a Madonna video, not to mention citations from *Macbeth*, Joseph Conrad, the Bible, and Frank Capra, which waltz about like incense. Blatty eschews the pea soup, rotating heads, and your-mother-sews-socks-in-hell blasphemy for the deliberate conventions of a police procedural. Although the identity of the killer is a foregone conclusion, the murder mystery is an appropriate genre to explore the mystery that really interests the writer-director, the Christian one. The Freddy Krueger crowd will probably find all the talk about sin and unbelief boring and bewildering, but Blatty doesn't need supernatural effects to dredge up the horror in life. And welcome restraint makes the abrupt intrusion of supernatural satanism pretty startling, with Brad Dourif stealing the show as a devilish minion in the demonic legion. **o o o Thomas Doherty**

FLATLINERS

Directed by Joel Schumacher. Columbia, 8/90, 125 mins. With: Kiefer Sutherland, Julia Roberts, William Baldwin.

This begins with the trappings of a medical thriller and ends up as a rather traditional ghost story, as student doctors kill and revive themselves to learn what is beyond death, only to be haunted by the ghosts of their past sins and anxieties. Despite some bumpy

transitional devices and a few implausibilities, the result is a slick, occasionally chilling movie with excellent performances that satisfies almost in spite of itself. The eerie near death/haunting sequences are nicely augmented by Eugenio Zanetti's stylish production design. Director Joel Schumacher (*THE LOST BOYS*) manages to keep things appropriately moody throughout, and his suspense sequences are first-rate. **o o Dan Perez**

FRANKENHOOKER

Directed by Frank Henenlotter. S.G.E., 6/90, 82 mins. With: James Lorinz, Patty Mullen, Charlotte Helmkamp, Shirley Stoler.

This midnight movie entry is a hysterical, but almost pornographic horror comedy from the fertile mind of *BASKET CASE* auteur Frank Henenlotter, definitely his best film to date. James Lorinz, of the cancelled sitcom *CITY*, is a delight as an aspiring mad scientist indirectly responsible for the death by lawnmower of his fiancée Patty Mullen. He preserves her head and builds her a new body with parts salvaged from Times Square prostitutes. The makeup effects by Gabe Bartalos are more cheesy than graphic and contribute to the overall hilarity of the end product. The nudity and unsavory milieu and language of the hookers makes it unlikely this will ever surface anywhere but on midnight showcases and unrated cassettes. **o o Judith P. Harris**

GHOST

Directed by Jerry Zucker. Paramount, 7/90, 121 mins. With: Patrick Swayze, Demi Moore, Whoopi Goldberg.

Whereas the afterlife affair in Steven Spielberg's *ALWAYS* drowned in a swamp of false heartbreak, director Jerry Zucker resurrects the genre's spirit with this heavenly mixture of suspense and romance. With a remarkable script that seamlessly jumps from *TOPPER*'s can't-see-him-now hu-

mor to Hitchcockian murder mystery, Bruce Joel Rubin (*BRAINSTORM*) turns a potentially ridiculous story into the most enchanting spiritual fable since *HERE COMES MR. JORDAN*. His vision of death is almost inviting, a wondrous ILM-created nether-realm where Patrick Swayze can pass through any object, land a solid punch, or have cloaked demons take villains to their just rewards. Zucker retains some of his *AIRPLANE* screwball craziness in Whoopi Goldberg's bug-eyed turn as a fake medium, but otherwise plays it hauntingly straight as Swayze becomes a supernatural avenger. The actors are equally marvelous at portraying their altered states, especially Vincent Schiavelli's demented subway spook who teaches Swayze how to make contact with the material world. In a film summer littered with corpses, it's great to have one that's dead *and* kicking. **o o o o Daniel Schweiger**

JETSONS: THE MOVIE

Directed by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera. 7/90, 82 mins. With the voices of: George O'Hanlon, Mel Blanc, Tiffany.

You think to yourself, "Y'know, this'd be almost tolerable if only they'd shut up for five seconds." Unfortunately, talk far outweighs action in this feature adaptation of Hanna-Barbera's mid-60's, animated sit-com. Kids may be entertained by the lame slapstick and the film's central mystery (although if you've seen any two *STAR TREK* episodes you already know who's sabotaging Spacey's asteroid-based sprocket factory). Parents may be less thrilled with the movie's all-Caucasian universe, and the fact that Jane and Judy still spend most of their days at the shopping mall. With its lifeless, by-the-book artwork, adolescents will be bored throughout, except, maybe, when Tiffany sings. Which is, of course, when

you'll begin wishing that everyone would start talking again.

o Dan Persons

ROCK ART: PSYCHEDELIC TELEVISION

Directed by Beau Lee. Aeon Home Video, 4/90, 30 mins. With: Fractal animation to music of The Moody Blues.

The triumphant return of mind-blowing. Fractal Lumination Volume I is the first installment of a video series which offers a sublimely benign version of what H.P. Lovecraft or Clark Ashton Smith might have beheld in their most hallucinatory visions: an endlessly flowing, eternally liquid crystal flash of DNA strips, star clusters, amoebas, vaginas, sea anemones, tentacles, all-seeing eyes, mandalas, and anything else the viewer's mind happily goofs on set to music by The Moody Blues drawn from their "In Search of the Lost Chord" and "Days of Future Past" albums. "Fractals" are computer-generated images derived from nature, and here they're made to dance with lovely, heady abandon. Peak moments themselves peak with "Ride My See-Saw's" rush of pure, good-natured exuberance. A piece of genuine *videofantastique*, this thirty-minute trip into abstract beauty for its own sake seems curiously innocent in its unabashed celebration of visual/aural tripping. And a portion of the video's sales go to reforestation. **o o o Charles Leayman**

THE WEIRDO

Directed by Andy Milligan. Green Tiger Pictures, 4/90, 91 mins. With: Steve Burington, Jessica Straus.

Bad film fanatics everywhere, rejoice! Andy Milligan, that paragon of quadruple-threat auteurism (writing, directing, photographing, and editing—I wouldn't be surprised if he also catered lunch and drove the honeywagon), has somehow found the funding to crank out yet another ninety-plus minutes of mind-



Style over substance, Liam Neeson as the scarred avenger of Sam Raimi's **DARKMAN**

boggling cinematic ineptitude. His direct-to-video effort is the not-so-moving tale of a learning-disabled man (Steve Burington) driven to murder and mutilation when his relationship with his club-footed girlfriend (Jessica Straus) is threatened. Milligan's camerawork is so bad that the entire film, shot with a hastily levelled tripod, looks like it was filmed on the side of a hill. And Straus has the odd tendency to forget her club-footed limp. But, believe me, these are but minor quibbles. **o Dan Persons**

WILD AT HEART

Directed by David Lynch. Goldwyn/Propaganda Films, 8/90, 127 mins. With: Nicolas Cage, Laura Dern, Diane Ladd, Willem Dafoe.

David Lynch, one of America's most original directors, provides a complex, wildly ambitious film, loosely based on Barry Gifford's novel of ill-fated lovers (Laura Dern and Nicolas Cage). The film incorporates the usual assortment of bizarre Lynchian characters (most memorable are Crispin Glover as a nutcase and Willem Dafoe as a villainous porno movie director) with fantasy sequences inspired by *THE WIZARD OF OZ*. It's all laced with graphic (but not gratuitous) sex and violence, quirky, off-center dialogue, perverse humor, and the characteristically dark sensibilities of the man behind *ERASERHEAD* and *BLUE VELVET*. Dern and Cage are astonishingly brash in their performances and, as in *TWIN PEAKS*, Lynch pushes the characters to the far brink of believability, with compelling results. **o o o o Dan Perez**

Damien Karras (Jason Miller) crucified in **EXORCIST III**.



TOTAL RECALL

Director Paul Verhoeven on his Mars vacation with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

By Bill Florence

Ask Paul Verhoeven what was most memorable about directing *TOTAL RECALL* and his reply will have nothing to do with the tremendous freedom given him by Carolco Pictures, or his colossal budget. He does not cite his film crew, part of which had worked with him before on *ROBOCOP*. Nor did the Academy Award-winning Dream Quest Images, or the script written by Ron Shusett, Dan O'Bannon and Gary Goldman prove to be the greatest attraction for Verhoeven.

The answer he *does* supply is given without hesitation. Said Verhoeven, "Working with Arnold [Schwarzenegger] was the most inspiring and most pleasant part of the whole production. Arnold is such a supportive guy, and he's so concerned with getting the best. He has a very pleasant temperament, always very balanced and always in a good mood . . . and that is in contrast to the whole production, which was very difficult.

"I'm not even talking about his acting; I'm talking about him as a human being," said Verhoeven. "His social abilities formed a support system which was probably the most pleasant aspect of the whole movie. I've never met an actor that is so easy to work with and is smart, makes good judg-

ments, and is so supportive of the director."

Contrary to what some may think, Schwarzenegger has, according to Verhoeven, no ego. "You can say to him, 'That looks ridiculous, Arnold! You cannot do that!' And he'll say, 'Oh, really? Well, what about this?' or 'Can we do it this way?' or 'If that doesn't look good, what do you think I should do?' You can tell Arnold anything about acting or about his hair, the color of his jacket, or whatever—he will never take it personally. And if he's not good, if he makes a mistake or mispronounces something, then he will change it."

Schwarzenegger's own mild temperament is in direct contrast to that of Verhoeven, whose reputation as an excitable director was confirmed by the cast of *TOTAL RECALL*.

Verhoeven (right) directs Schwarzenegger's encounter with a surly Mars mutant.



Schwarzenegger as Quaid, in the film's quintessential Phillip K. Dick-inspired sequence, fending off a doctor from *Recall* trying to convince him he's dreaming.

"I'm much less in control than Arnold," said Verhoeven. "He doesn't have to raise his voice to get what he wants. He has a lot of power. If Arnold says, 'Yes,' it's yes. If he says 'No,' it's no. It is that easy. He has more power than anybody else I've known in my life, and he's probably even-tempered in part *because* he has that power. I'm much more emotional, much more directly confrontational."

Such an unassuming nature in an actor has not been common in Verhoeven's experience. "With many actors, you have to be very careful. A lot of them, if you criticize them—and I don't mean criticize in a mean way, like 'This is completely stupid!'—if I say, 'no, that should be different,' a lot of actors will lose confidence or

start being nervous. But Arnold is so self-confident. He doesn't have an ego. You can just put that aside and talk about what's necessary."

Such praise would be meaningless if Schwarzenegger's performance in front of the camera wasn't up to snuff, but Verhoeven felt Schwarzenegger excelled in his role as Quaid. "His performance was great. This is still an action movie, of course, but there is much of what you would call 'normal' stuff, where [Arnold] is with his wife or the woman he loves, in bed, at the breakfast table."

Verhoeven wanted to break the mold for his leading actor as *TWINS* had done. "In most of his movies, they have made Arnold into a kind of superhero. In *TWINS*, they made him something different, they used comedy. But there is only one movie I know, the first one he ever did, where they used him as Arnold, and that was *STAY HUNGRY*. What I wanted to portray was Arnold as I know him, where he is just a pleasant guy to be with."

Summed up Verhoeven, "Many see Arnold only as this big muscle man, and that's not true. Muscle means no brains, right? To the contrary! Arnold has big muscles *and* big brains! He's very smart, and a very gifted man on a lot of levels." □

REVIEWS

The vision of a Phillip K. Dick, saddled with body slam schtick

TOTAL RECALL

A Tri-Star release of a Carolco Pictures production, in association with Elliot Schick & Robert Fentress. 5/90, 109 mins. In Dolby & color. Director, Paul Verhoeven. Producers, Buzz Feitshans & Ronald Shusett. Executive producers, Mario Kassar & Andrew Vajna. Director of photography, Jost Vacano. Editor, Frank J. Urioste. Production designer, William Sandell. Art directors, James Tocci & Jose Rodriguez Granada. Special effects supervisor, Thomas L. Fisher. Visual effects supervisor, Eric Brevig. Special visual effects, Dream Quest Images. Special makeup effects/character visual effects, Rob Bottin. Set designer, Robert Gould. Costume designer, Erica Edell Phillips. Music, Jerry Goldsmith. Sound, Nelson Stoll & Fred Runner. 2nd unit director, Vic Armstrong. Stunt coordinator, Armstrong & Joel Kramer. Screenplay by Shusett, Dan O'Bannon & Gary Goldman, based on a story by Shusett, O'Bannon & Jon Povill, inspired by "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" by Phillip K. Dick.

Quaid/Hauser Arnold Schwarzenegger
Melina Rachel Ticotin
Lori Sharon Stone
Cohaagen Ronny Cox
Richter Michael Ironside
George/Kuato Marshall Bell
Benny Mel Johnson, Jr.
Helm Michael Champion
Dr. Edgemar Roy Brocksmith

by Thomas Doherty

Body slam and head trip, TOTAL RECALL tries to satisfy two different science fiction traditions: the action-oriented adventure in outer space and the mental peregrination through inner space. Sold as the former, it's a good deal more satisfying as the latter. At its best, the film is a dizzying whirl into the catacombs of identity and selfhood; at its worst, it's another cherry bomb in the summer fireworks display.

The mind has never exactly been *terra incognita* for science fiction, but the genre took its highest dives into the watery subconscious during those fabulous '60s. The exchange of Newtonian physics for Jungian psychology was a historical confluence not unrelated to the widespread recreational ingestion of barrel-shaped pharmaceuticals, notably LSD, the perspective-altering drug of choice. In this sense, no one popped the literary synapses better than science fiction writer Phillip K. Dick, who, in a series of crystalline novels, began surveying the space between the ears with mind-bending, hallucinatory brilliance. *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, published in 1968, the year of synchronicity, remains his best known work, due to Ridley Scott's 1982 film version, *BLADERUNNER*. The film title has now supplanted the book's original title in the



Schwarzenegger learns that rebel leader Kuato's hideout is inside the chest of guerilla Marshall Bell, but Rob Bottin's rubbery puppet is not the showstopper that was intended.

paperback edition but Scott's film had little of P.K.D.'s woozy, metaphysical imbalance.

Dick's short story "We Can Remember It for You Wholesale" is the source of TOTAL RECALL, a *really* big budget epic featuring a boxoffice attraction not noted for projecting deep levels of interior psychological complexity. Despite a potentially plot-smothering budget and a musclebound lead, screenwriters Ronald Shusett and Dan O'Bannon have faithfully retained much of the identity-probing edge of Dick's work. The author—who died in 1982 and whose name appears nowhere on the cover of the novelization—would have been pleased to know that although the high-octane pyrotechnics are virtually non-stop, the best energy here is all psychic.

The plot is pure, P.K.D.-quality windowpane. Quaid (Arnold Schwarzenegger) is a construction worker with an identity problem (or rather two identity problems) and to find himself (or some other guy) he journeys to Mars to lead an underground (or maybe subliminal) revolution. In good '60s—and Dick—fashion, Quaid discovers his dilemma at ReKall, Inc, where you can take a trip without taking a trip.

Always a cold-blooded customer, *ROBO-auteur* Paul Verhoeven directs Schwarzenegger's epic

journey of self-discovery with his accustomed clinical detachment. Together, the two Aryans pump iron and irony at a dizzying pace—for every innocent bystander ripped to shreds by gunfire there's a wicked throwaway gag (look fast for the "Mars Today" dispenser). Verhoeven has always had a cruel streak. His *FLESH AND BLOOD* (1985) was by far the most brutal of the late and unlamented EXCALIBUR/KRULL "tits and lizard" cycle, a medieval epic with absolutely no mystical sword and sorcery romance. While other directors were playing dungeons and damsels, Verhoeven was staging love scenes before a hanging tree with rotting corpses.

More than the body count and Uzi blasts, Verhoeven's cold eye and cruel tone probably explains the flack directed at TOTAL RECALL. The breakneck and virtually non-stop violence was widely seen in Hollywood as both excessive and misguided—carelessly pushing the outside of the R-rating envelope in an atmosphere of retrenchment in everything from rap music to arts funding. Since action-oriented science fiction exists for gratuitous violence, the argument seems to be that TOTAL RECALL had *too much* gratuitous violence.

Schwarzenegger's big advantage remains his big problem—he's such a physical powerhouse

that any potential threat (say, an entire planetary army) is immediately rendered pitiful. His Master of the Universe aura pumps you up. As a focus for sympathy and fear, his statuesque invulnerability is an insurmountable obstacle. As for romance, well—in a bedroom clinch with a sturdy babe like Sharon Stone, one can't help but think that a wrong move will snap her backbone.

Not that Schwarzenegger isn't likable—his off-screen persona as good-humored lunk is transferring nicely. Likewise, his branching out into comedy on SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE and in TWINS is a smart career move for a personality and body type always inches away from self-parody. In fact, Arnold's exuberance and health subtextually smoothes over and makes more tolerable Verhoeven's affectless attitude to violence.

The forces of evil are the usual corporate maestro and his executive officer. In a retread of his *ROBOCOP* role, Ronny Cox is on automatic pilot, but perennial bad guy Michael Ironside turns in

continued on page 60

Dream Quest's Mars matte jobs look like Mars matte jobs—for the money spent they could have gone on location.



The look and style of Gould's comic detective without the verve

DICK TRACY

A Buena Vista release of a Touchstone Pictures presentation in association with Silver Screen Partners IV. 5/90, 103 mins. In Dolby & color. Director, Warren Beatty. Producer, Beatty. Coproduced by Jon Landau. Executive producers, Barrie M. Osborne, Art Linson & Floyd Mutrux. Director of photography, Vittorio Storaro. Editor, Richard Marks. Production designer, Richard Sylbert. Art director, Harold Michelson. Visual effects, Buena Vista Visual Effects Group. Special character makeup, John Caglione Jr. & Doug Drexler. Set designer, Rick Simpson. Costume designer, Milena Canonero. Music, Danny Elfman. Songs, Stephen Sondheim. Screenplay by Jim Cash & Jack Epps Jr., based on characters created by Chester Gould for the "Dick Tracy" comic strip.

Dick Tracy	Warren Beatty
Kid	Charlie Korsmo
Tess Trueheart	Glenn Headly
Breathless Mahoney	Madonna
Big Boy Caprice	Al Pacino
Mumbles	Dustin Hoffman
Flattop	William Forsythe
Chief Brandon	Charles Durning
88 Keys	Mandy Patinkin
Lips Manlis	Paul Sorvino
Pruneface	R. G. Armstrong
D. A. Fletcher	Dick Van Dyke

by Dan Persons

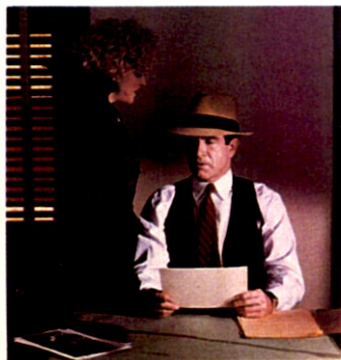


Tracy investigates a mob hideout, an example of film craftspeople working at their best.

In the opening of Warren Beatty's *DICK TRACY*, the camera sweeps out the window of the intrepid detective's apartment and up into a Michael Lloyd matte sequence of a city that could only exist in the mind's eye—a jagged skyline receding to infinity with streets that stretch in all directions. It's a stunning moment, and one's hopes soar along with the camera: having set forth to capture the artifice of a comic strip in a live-action film, it appears that director/star Beatty will succeed by establishing a reality in which exaggeration is the norm, a reality in which Chester Gould's most bizarre creations could exist as comfortably as a gat in a rum-runner's hand.

Credit production designer Richard Sylbert for the vibrant metropolis that is Tracy's city. Credit makeup supervisors John Caglione and Doug Drexler for taking the most grotesque of Gould's creations—Flattop, Pruneface, the whole gang—and making

Madonna and Beatty, stuck at his desk.



them work in three dimensions. Credit cinematographer Vittorio Storaro for taking Sylbert's clashing palette of "Tracy colors" and giving them a depth and richness that comic-strips never knew. Within the first few minutes, you know you are watching craftspeople at their best, throwing their hearts and souls into a project.

Unfortunately, it's also in those first minutes that it becomes clear that something is very wrong with *DICK TRACY*. It's hard to figure out just what director Beatty was after here. No doubt he wanted to avoid having his film collapse into camp. Quite possibly, he was also seeking something other than the *noir* atmosphere that typifies most period crime films (and last year's *BATMAN*). But, having dispensed with those two extremes, he seems to have come up with little to fill the gap.

In the opening third, as we are introduced to the main characters, Beatty alternates between sequences of mob kingpin Big Boy Caprice extending his power base into a rival's territory, and of Tracy and girlfriend Tess Trueheart attempting to win the trust of a young orphan, Kid. The cuts, which should be building momentum and drawing us toward the eventual confrontation between hood and cop, instead seem ill-timed and random, as if Beatty stabbed wildly at some sort of rhythm and missed completely.

For all that the story is a layering-on of chases—Tess after Tracy, Tracy after Kid and Big Boy, Big Boy after Tracy and the sultry *chanteuse* Breathless Maho-

ney, Breathless after the "respectable life" and Tracy, and the faceless Blank after all these and more—there's no tension, and no suspense. When Tess is kidnapped and subsequently discovered in the upper reaches of Big Boy's night-club, the action seems so devoid of peril that, even as Flattop approaches a window not three feet from where Tracy stands, you never once feel that the characters are in any great danger.

This flatness carries itself all the way to Beatty's peculiarly stolid portrayal of the nation's number-one crimestopper. In my book, a man who has Breathless Mahoney crawling on all fours across his desktop may or may not yield to his baser urges, but he's damn well going to show *some* sort of response. Beatty instead sits and stares, so stock-still and stone-faced that one half-suspects he has caught some exceedingly sensitive portion of his anatomy in a drawer. Against such odds, it's no wonder that Madonna, as Breathless, can only help to bring things up to, at best, a low simmer. She's not as bad an actress as some have suggested—certainly no Bacall (then again, Beatty's no Bogart), but good enough to make one hope that someday she'll come across a script more suited to her abilities. As it is, she gets some good laugh-lines, and one lovely, Stephen Sondheim-penned song: the duet "What Can You Lose," with Mandy Patinkin (here playing the amoral pianist, Eighty-Eight Keys).

Among other principals, Glenn Headly as Tess Trueheart is woefully

underused, coming to life only in a couple of brief scenes with Kid. That leaves the field clear for Al Pacino as Big Boy Caprice—and, brother, does he run with it. Buried under layers of makeup and chewing scenery at a clip that puts Jack Nicholson's Joker to shame, Pacino manages to steal the show. Here's a mobster so twisted by ambition and fear that he has become a physical and emotional troglodyte: brutish, self-pitying, striving mightily for an intellectualism that he will never achieve. Pacino plays the hood as a bundle of broad gestures and nervous ticks. Over the top? Sure. Fun? Goddam right.

With Pacino doing a warp eight on the dramatic scale, it's a miracle any other actors stand out, but they do. Bill Forsythe, hampered by short screen-time and one of the most elaborate makeup jobs in the film, still manages to turn Flattop into as memorable a big-screen punk as has ever brandished a tommy-gun. Dustin Hoffman is priceless as Mumbles: a cross between his performance in *RAIN MAN* and his allegedly spot-on impression of producer Robert Evans' self-involved muttering. Charlie Korsmo delivers a clever and unaffected portrayal of Kid, managing in the bargain to bring some life back to the cliché of the street-wise child hungry for love (and here director Beatty must be credited for making the character central to the story without having us feel that the waif is being crammed down our throats).

If only such deftness of judgment was in evidence throughout the picture. It's as if the technical crew believed more in the project than its own director; the film, while beautiful to look at, never seems to be taking us anywhere (in that, it arguably presents the greatest dichotomy between text and technology since *STAR TREK: THE MOTION PICTURE*). Now and then there are glimmers of what might have been: a fistfight where Beatty suddenly shifts to an undercranked camera; a wonderfully kinetic sequence where Tracy is trapped in a basement with a sabotaged boiler, the contraption spilling steam into every corner of the frame. These are the larger-than-life moments that Detective Tracy was born for. □

Matte Artist Michael Lloyd on DICK TRACY

By Daniel Schweiger

DICK TRACY's opening camera pan across an art deco metropolis of twinkling skylights and Bauhaus skyscrapers, linking Tracy's apartment to a gangland nightspot, is framed with the precision of comic book panels. The shot instantly establishes the film's pop art universe in the most remarkable one-take opening since Orson Welles' camera magic in *A TOUCH OF EVIL*. Never before has matte artwork played such an integral role in a film. The primary-colored Gotham of DICK TRACY is as bizarrely tangible as any of the film's deformed villains or straight-jawed heroes.

For 41-year-old matte supervisor Michael Lloyd, the work is the culmination of a career at Walt Disney, begun as an apprentice in the studio's animation department. Lloyd has contributed mattes to Disney's *SOMETHING WICKED THIS WAY COMES*, *CAPTAIN EO* and *RETURN TO OZ*, which garnered him an Academy Award nomination. Lloyd said he got the promise of an Oscar when Warren Beatty hired him.

"He said that either I'd get the gold, or be run out of town," recalled Lloyd. "Though some people thought that Warren gave the mattes to Disney because he could blame us if something went wrong—he was no fool. Warren liked our ideas from the beginning, even if he didn't have a grasp of what he wanted at the start. All Warren realized was that DICK TRACY had to be outrageous, and resemble the comics to the point where shots would have very little activity. That pulpy look had to be designed around Vittorio Storaro's intense lighting, so I consequently went for mattes that were completely the opposite of *BATMAN*'s. DICK TRACY's city had to be a place where people wanted to live, and we studied Maxfield Parrish and Germany's Bauhaus architecture for inspiration. But we never looked at other paintings once we got started."

Over the year and a half that Lloyd and co-supervisor Harrison Ellenshaw combined models with paintings for the film's 63 mattes, Beatty's renowned nitpicking often caused them to redo work. "That happened

whenever he thought the mattes looked 'too normal,' especially with the Kid's orphanage. It was originally in the middle of a city block, so we eliminated the opposing buildings. Then we placed it in the middle of the frame, so the orphanage would resemble a haunted house. But the city remained in the background, which gave the impression that life was yonder. However, it was the signs that really got to Warren. We had eight shots with 'Hotel Grant' in them, which still wasn't generic enough. So we changed that to 'Hotel Grand,' which meant recompositing all of those paintings. Other times we'd even have to change their coloring from black to white. But you can only establish your 'look' by going for that feeling over and over."

Two of DICK TRACY's mattes would beautifully violate Beatty's rule of inaction. "After Big Boy is defeated, fireworks had to explode over the bridge that Tracy and Tess are standing on. But it wouldn't have done us any good to composite the real thing, since fireworks are so fine and frilly. We broadened them by filtering their light, shooting them out of sync. The final shot where Tracy and the Kid run off into the city sunrise had to be different from anything before it, yet also fit into the movie's color scheme. Our objective was for the street light to turn from a dark blue to a golden yellow, which meant breaking the rule of never changing the elements near a matte line. We would be throwing light on a flat surface, and that illumination would reveal the magenta sky. The overhead sun was a motion-control lamp, which was shot on a



Dick Tracy chases the Kid through a trainyard, a Lloyd matte shot featuring a painted skyline and a miniature train filmed with a motion-control camera. Below Right: Filming the live-action element of Beatty and Charlie Korsmo.

smoke stage with high lamps and a separate train model. Since it was bouncing off the haze, the light ended up appearing as if it originated from the clouds overhead. But after all that work, Warren still thought the elevated trolley looked too tall and fat. So we used an anamorphic lens to widen it, and Warren ended up loving the shot without ever realizing what we'd done to fix it!"

The Disney executives were equally in the dark about Lloyd's paintings, only seeing the finished mattes when Beatty deemed it necessary. "No one from the studio ever came down to look at our work, since everything they saw was through Warren. But we knew that [studio chief Michael] Eisner loved our work, since all he wanted to do at a story conference was talk about the mattes."

While DICK TRACY's rough

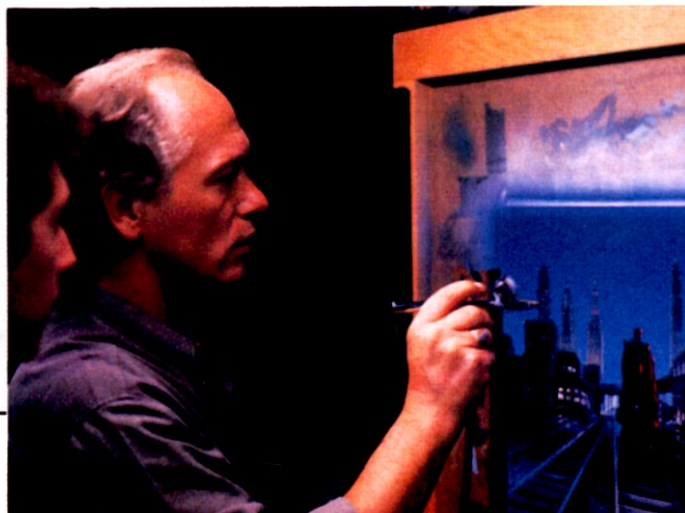


cut coincided with its finished running time, previews saw the film grow longer until Beatty pared down his footage from the audience's vital response cards, an editing process that claimed Lloyd's ingenious opening as its first casualty. "The shot was designed to start on a miniature, then jump onto a 24' matte. These two formats would keep interchanging over 2½ minutes, with Warren judiciously placing his credits over it. I begged and pleaded with him when the pace had to quicken, and he told me flat-out 'You lose.' So we ended up reshooting one frame for every three, which tremendously shortened the opening. But now it doesn't bother me, since I realize that today's audiences have been geared for a faster pace. The trade-off is that you lose a sense of where the movie's taking place. But I'm not the director, and DICK TRACY wouldn't have sold any less tickets if the opening matte remained at its original length."

Despite having this groundbreaking sequence effectively smothered with titles, Lloyd is satisfied that his work has shown through Beatty's stylistic touches. "Warren ended up

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Lloyd, co-supervisor at Buena Vista Visual Effects Group, painting the matte.



Dante's fun but always suggests an undertow of genuine horror

GREMLINS 2:
THE NEW BATCH

A Warner Bros release of an Amblin Entertainment presentation of a Michael Finnell production. 6/90. 105 mins. In Dolby & color. Director, Joe Dante. Producer, Finnell. Executive producers, Steven Spielberg, Frank Marshall & Kathleen Kennedy. Director of photography, John Hora. Editor, Kent Beyda. Production designer/2nd unit director, James Spencer. Art director, Joe Lucky & Rick Butler. Set decorator, John Anderson. Special effects supervisor, Ken Pepiot. Gremlin & Mogwai effects supervisor, Rick Baker. Bugs Bunny & Daffy Duck animation written and directed by Chuck Jones. Stop-motion animation, Doug Beswick. Visual effects supervisor, Dennis Michelson. Visual effects animation, VCE/Peter Kuran. Set designer, John Anderson. Costume designer, Rosanna Norton. Music, Jerry Goldsmith. Source music, Alexander Courage. Cartoon music, Fred Steiner. Sound, Ken King & Douglas Vaughan. Stunt coordinator, Mike McLaughy. Screenplay by Charlie Haas, based on characters created by Chris Columbus.

Billy Peltzer Zach Galligan
Kate Beringer Phoebe Cates
Daniel Clamp John Glover
Grandpa Fred Robert Prosky
Forster Robert Picardo
Dr. Catheter Christopher Lee

by Charles Leayman



Cute but lethal, Dante's gremlin pops out of a computer console only to thrash its operator.

An extended live-action cartoon, Joe Dante's follow-up to his 1984 hit (and Warner's biggest pre-BATMAN grosser) opens and closes with Chuck Jones' incurably egotistic Daffy Duck trying to depose Bugs Bunny and Porky Pig from the Loony Tunes logo. What on first viewing appears to be an unexpected surprise before the main feature turns out to be Dante's up-front warning that his latest is an all-out assault on pop culture, the fantasy genre, and the audience's time-honored assumptions. And, indeed, Daffy's *id*-unleashed, anarchic

Three mogwai newborns looking for trouble, stand-ins for our own subterranean urge to wreak havoc.



spirit is the presiding deity over Dante's loud, gaudy, nastily clever celebration of manic energy in all its craziest colors.

Gone is GREMLINS' bucolic, Capraesque Kingston Falls: the new locale is Manhattan, whose own presiding deity, Donald Trump, gets deftly (and rather gently) satirized in the figure Daniel Clamp (played with gusto by John Glover). With a bit of Ted Turner thrown in for good measure, Clamp is the entrepreneur triumphant, his corporate emblem the earth squeezed in a vise, his towering "Clamp Centre" a yuppie Moloch. Heros (Zach Galligan and Phoebe Cates), now Clamp employees, are mere (if charming) pretexts for the gremlins' madhouse mischief and soon take a backseat to the slimily rubberoid creatures that makeup and effects master Rick Baker has concocted.

Gizmo, the Keane-eyed Mogwai belonging to Key Luke's benevolently Oriental Mr. Wing, is orphaned by his master's death and finds himself in the "Splice O' Life" genetics lab that Christopher Lee's Dr. Catheter oversees in the Clamp Centre. (Lee's expression, both stunned and contemptuous, at seeing Gizmo shimmy to Fats Domino's "I'm Ready" is worth the price of admission.)

Once the premise of gremlins taking over Clamp Centre kicks in, Dante wings it with a marvelously goofy string of witty, violent, self-reflexive, and user-friendly gags. Christopher Lee's dignified, comic presence instantly

signals the director's intent: to whip up a carnival of shared movie memories for those old enough to remember, while still delivering a truckload of thrills for today's young groundlings. Charismatic character performers like Dick Miller (in his eighth outing for Dante), Kenneth Tobey, Paul Bartel, Robert Prosky, and Kathleen Freeman supply an aura of in-house nostalgia.

Allusions to pop culture and movies are everywhere: nods to *INVASION OF THE BODY SNATCHERS*, *THE WIZARD OF OZ*, Dr. Quatermass, ghost-host "Roland," and countless others spill from the screen with happy abandon. Even soaring, Jerry Goldsmith-scored stop-motion effects ice the multi-layered cake of Dante's imagination, topped by a lumbering, Harryhausen-inspired gremlin/spider that is the film's real star.

At the director's gleeful bidding, screenwriter Charlie Haas has improvised a perpetual motion machine of sight gags, in-jokes, cult cameos, and social barbs. Clamp Centre continually reverbs with taped reminders that *CASABLANCA* will be televised on the Clamp network "in color and with a happier ending," or admonitions that some hapless visitor's car must be removed from the Centre's parking garage because the vehicle's "old and dirty."

But as always it's the gremlins themselves who capture the audience's skewed affections. Like pre-Oedipal children bereft of a moralizing super-ego, the gremlins represent purely impure

impulse: everyone's subterranean urge to wreak havoc and play endless practical jokes on the whole world. GREMLINS 2 does this notion even one better by explicitly linking it to the chrome-and-steel world of *yuponomics*. Clamp, reflecting on his building and what it has spawned, conjectures that "when you build for things they move in." If the original GREMLINS were "creatures of the (repressed, small-town) *id*," THE NEW BATCH are the imaginative embodiment of the past decade's omnivorous greed.

Joe Dante is surely one of the American movie mainstream's most self-consciously reflexive artists in both form and content, but he's never pretentious.

Encyclopedically aware of genre movies past, he plays with their conventions with a jokey but alert spirit. (*EXPLORERS*, his most seemingly personal film, perhaps failed commercially because its humor was finally too lyrical, too melancholy, too absorbed in a *PETER PAN* fantasy that couldn't conceal its own sadness.) Dante's work is, to be sure, aimed at the child in all of us, but unlike many, he remembers that childhood is a time of terrors as well as joy. The myriad pods, vampires, and ghoulies he recurrently pays homage to are necessarily the displaced embodiment of childhood's most potent fears. That, as an adult, he still evokes them can be seen as either obstinate regression or a canny understanding that the fears undergone in the child's nighttime bedroom never really die.

However raucous and zany they become, however mischievously camp (as in GREMLINS 2's musical finale, a crazed amalgam of Gershwin, Sinatra and 42ND STREET), Joe Dante's films always suggest an undertow of genuine horror. Let's face it: the gremlins are great fun to see and hear, but their social and psychological implications are hellish. The gag of slipping a mousetrap into a secretary's sandwich is funny up to (and including) the sound of the sprung trap and the victim's muffled scream. But a disquieting sense of real pain nonetheless lingers. Perhaps only for a few moments, but in those moments lies Dante's distinction as a filmmaker. □

GREMLINS 2 Makeup input at the script stage

Oscar-winning makeup supervisor Rick Baker was courted for his job on GREMLINS 2 with the promise of creative input in devising the puppet characters, and the offer of being made a co-producer. Baker agreed to do the film only if given input at the scripting stage. According to a source close to the production, Baker was allowed to provide as much input as he wanted, but little of it was heeded beyond inserting Baker's Gremlin names into the screenplay.

Lost in the shuffle was Baker's idea for Gremlins named Lenny and George, patterned after the characters in Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*. Baker had actually designed big, dumb Lenny with the facial articulation for



Co-producer Rick Baker.

the speaking role of the "brain" Gremlin, a part given to another character. George was provided features resembling an Edward G. Robinson. Neither character showed up much in the final film.

Because director Joe Dante would not commit in preproduction to which character would be required for each scripted action, Baker designed and fabricated each of the film's six main Gremlin characters with full capabilities, including telemetry suits and close-up heads with servo motors, as well as simple hand puppets. Time constraints prevented most of the sophisticated mechanics from ever being used—an estimated \$1 million of effects tricks never came out of the box—with 90% of all shots achieved with the simplest hand-operated Gremlins—dubbed "butt puppets" by the crew. □

Zemeckis caps off his heartfelt time travel saga

BACK TO THE FUTURE: PART III

A Universal release of a Steven Spielberg presentation of an Amblin Entertainment production. 5/90, 120 mins. In Dolby & color. Director, Robert Zemeckis. Producers, Bob Gale & Neil Canton. Executive producers, Spielberg, Frank Marshall & Kathleen Kennedy. Director of photography, Dean Cundey. Editor, Arthur Schmidt & Harry Keramidas. Production designer, Rick Carter. Art directors, Marjorie Stone McShirley & Jim Teegarden. Special visual effects, Industrial Light & Magic. Visual effects supervisors, Ken Ralston & Scott Farrar. Mechanical effects supervisor, Michael Lantieri. Set designer, Michael Taylor. Costume designer, Joanna Johnston. Music, Alan Silvestri. Sound, William B. Kaplan. 2nd unit director, Max Kleven. Stunt coordinator, Walter Scott. Screenplay by Gale, based on a story by Zemeckis & Gale.

Marty/Seamus	Michael J. Fox
Dr. Emmett Brown	Christopher Lloyd
Clara Clayton	Mary Steenburgen
Buford/Biff	Thomas F. Wilson
Maggie/Lorraine	Lea Thompson

by Charles Leayman

Who would have thought, after the distinctly sour taste left by its immediate predecessor, that BACK TO THE FUTURE: PART III would supply such a rousingly charming capper to the time-tripping saga of Marty McFly and Doc Brown? Both installments were shot back to back, a nearly four-hour epic (a sort of post-modern GONE WITH THE WIND) sweeping frenetically through the gray despair of PART II's "alternate" universe to climax grandly with the final chapter's redemption of the entire space-time continuum. Including the original, director Robert Zemeckis and screenwriter Bob Gale's time-bending chronicle is an authentic cinematic achievement, a larky skid on a cosmic banana peel, a perpetual-motion engine throwing off energy and melancholy, sweetness and fun.

As PART III's western locale and action suggest, John Ford is the spiritual force behind Zemeckis' recreation of a time and place less frenzied than our own, but fraught with its own singular violence. Ford was the poet laureate of the American cinematic West, and his films (including such masterpieces as THE SEARCHERS and THE MAN WHO SHOT LIBERTY VALANCE) form a hallowed part of America's cultural psyche. The image of Marty speeding past the sagebrush in his DeLorean time machine with a painted war party on his tail deftly twists both actual and cinematic history into a brilliant, surreal knot, with the looming buttes of Monument Valley lending a visual charge of lunar strangeness. The scene is knock-



Director Robert Zemeckis, linking past and future with a rousing steam train-propelled climax, a pulse-pounding action tour de force.

about poetry: a sharp, surefire blend of Saturday matinee excitement and nostalgic *frisson*.

Doc's autumnal romance with schoolmarm Clara Clayton (the delicate Mary Steenburgen) is a welcome addition to the series' otherwise male-centered plot. (Marty's girlfriend Jennifer was last seen snoozing on her front porch swing in anticipation of a SLEEPING BEAUTY wake-up call.) As her initials suggest, Clara is the movie's Clementine Carter, Ford's moving emblem of Eastern civility come West. Just as one of MY DARLING CLEMENTINE's great set-pieces was the communal dance on the wooden floor of an unfinished church, so Doc and Clara cavort together during a similar romp in celebration of the Hill Valley Court House's freshly laid foundation (with music courtesy of a frontier-clad ZZ Top!).

Besides dancing, Doc and Clara also share a love of Jules Verne. At one point, under the kind of star-drenched sky that is an Amblin trademark, he tries to explain the future of space travel in answer to her wish to visit the heavens, only to be reminded that he's been cribbing from Verne's *From the Earth to the Moon*. It's a lovely sequence, punctuated by the inevitable shooting star: Spielbergian shorthand for wonder, fantasy, and love.

Hill Valley circa 1885 is the archetypal Western town familiar from countless movies and book

illustrations, dusty and dreamlike in its quaintness, representing capitalism at a relatively benign if rough-hewn stage of existence (unless you happen to be an Indian, chased from sight by the film's rescuing cavalry).

Fit as a fiddle throughout, BACK TO THE FUTURE: PART III races to a breakneck finish as Doc and Marty purloin a steam engine to push their DeLorean up to breakneck speed across a bridge that isn't even all there. Director Zemeckis (no stranger to momentum after ROMANCING THE STONE and WHO FRAMED ROGER RABBIT) orchestrates one of the most thrilling railroad escapades since Buster Keaton's extraordinary THE GENERAL in 1927: a pulse-pounding, Pearl White-like *tour de force*. And the climactic engine-off-the-bridge plunge is surely the most satisfying since David Lean's THE BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI.

One would think that the filmmakers could scarcely top themselves after such a sequence, but there's a wonderfully fiendish flying contraption out of L. Frank Baum that one-ups even the demon DeLorean's dazzling (and demolished) glamour. The breathtaking sight of this flying whirligig (spontaneously applauded by the audience) imparts a dizzyingly happy farewell (or so we are told) to a wildly imaginative, genuinely heartfelt American odyssey combining hip consumerism with an anguished yearning for control over one's fate.

BACK TO THE FUTURE celebrates white, middle-class domesticity even as it exercises many of its underlying fears (powerlessness, economic insecurity, generational conflict, mortality). I suspect that many of today's children and adolescents will return to Marty McFly's adventures with renewed pleasure in their own middle age, finding still that comforting sense of familial continuity and personal control (however precarious) that is surely the secret of the series' success. Even should Zemeckis and company decide to artificially attenuate their savvy cinematic brainchild, they will surely be hard put to better BACK TO THE FUTURE: PART III's sumptuously satisfying conclusion. □

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DAN CURTIS

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lived series KOLCHAK: THE NIGHT STALKER (ABC, 1974). "I wanted nothing to do with that," said Curtis. "You can't do that each week. It was a disaster. It was a terrible show. It deserved to be quickly off the air."

Other acclaimed Curtis TV movies in the horror field included 1968's THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, directed by Charles Jarrett and starring Jack Palance, hailed by some as the best version of the classic horror tale ever filmed. And Curtis reunited with Palance for a 1973 version of DRACULA which he directed as well as produced. "That is the best DRACULA that was ever made," said Curtis. "In all my horror films, my monster usually has an additional dimension. You can usually end up feeling sorry for him. In DRACULA, we invented this whole past for him so you could see this once-great warrior. Barnabas was always regretful. You certainly feel sorry for Jekyll. And I always tried to find ways to put humor in it, and that's not easy."

After a string of horror features for television, including THE NIGHT STRANGLER (1972), a Kolchak sequel, FRANKENSTEIN (1973), directed by Glenn Jordan, THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY (1973), directed by Jordan, THE NORLIS TAPES (1974), SCREAM OF THE WOLF (1974), THE TURN OF THE SCREW (1974), and TRILOGY OF TERROR (1975), Curtis decided to get out of the horror field after making BURNT OFFERINGS (1976), a theatrical feature for United Artists starring Bette Davis, one of his least successful efforts. His last horror outing for TV was CURSE OF THE BLACK WIDOW (1977).

"I never completely ruled out doing another horror project," Curtis said. "If an EXORCIST had come my way, I would have done it in a second. I certainly never wanted to do DARK SHADOWS again, but for years people have been coming after me to put it back on. My reaction was, why bother? But after WINDS OF WAR and WAR AND REMEMBRANCE, I felt like I had accomplished just about everything I had to accomplish in television. And it started all over again—"DARK SHADOWS! DARK SHADOWS! DARK SHADOWS!" Now, even though I've agreed to revive it for NBC, I will never just stay exclusively with DARK SHADOWS."

It was the acclaim Curtis received for his monumental

World War II drama WAR AND REMEMBRANCE that made him feel comfortable enough to dabble with horror once again. Remarked Curtis, "People have said to me since I've finished WAR AND REMEMBRANCE, 'How are you going to top yourself?' That's crazy. I don't plan to try. There's nothing I can do to top myself. I will never completely recover from it. I'm not destroyed by it, but it's something that will live with me forever. The images and moments run through my mind all the time. It will never leave me—never. This is something I'll be proud of until the day I go." □

NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD

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zombie horror so straight. The two sequels have their moments (well, at least the first one does), but they are excessive, self-conscious, almost baroque. In its cold deliberateness, NLD showed that horror is a dish best served cold.

Good Badness: Somehow, NLD's formal failings contribute to its atmosphere of terror almost as much as its formal virtues. The effectiveness of Romero's cinematic technique—off-kilter camera angles, the use of quiet and sound to build tension, dark atmosphere (not expressive *film noir* or elaborate Universal darkness, but honest-to-god nighttime darkness)—is evident enough. Less explicable is the way the (clearly unintended) faults, inadequacies, and low-budget production add to the film's ultimate power.

For example, the acting runs the gamut from barely adequate to laughably awful. In a way that is almost Brechtian, however, the periodic distancing works to accentuate the horror. The grainy footage gives it a documentary look and the enforced moments of clinical detachment ("Gads, is that guy a bad actor, or what?") give the film the on-the-spot aura of filmed reality. Ironically, the only really great actors in the film—a bravura display of ensemble playing—are the zombies. The extras are, as the saying goes, "into their zomb." Regardless of the attire that gives hints of their animate past life, they share the same zonked-out but intense expression—and the same lifeless hunger.

Dead Meat: Even in a permissive, live-and-let-live culture, feasting on your fellow person remains a cultural taboo. This is important given that sex as a source of repression (and hence horror) has fallen on hard times since the '60s. The visceral repul-

sion has as much to do with being a reminder of death as the concept of eating the dead. Safely put to rest, the dead—and the idea of death—lurches up from the ground to disrupt our serene social life. The relentlessness, the unity, and the sense of mission of the dead is a terrible contrast to the interruptions, disunity, and aimlessness of the living. But then, that's the point about NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD—the title has always fit not just the zombies but their foodstuff. □

TOTAL RECALL

continued from page 55

another fine rotten characterization. With his high forehead, thinning hair, and killer smile, Ironside comes off like a Jack Nicholson for the budget conscious. One unexpected evil twist occurs when a sympathetically drawn black taxicab driver turns betrayer—these figures are usually sops for the inner city audience and are seldom positioned negatively. It's another measure of Verhoeven's boundary-breaking independence.

If the TOTAL RECALL psychology is engaging, the science is sub-grade school. Science fiction purists will be apoplectic at the frivolity with which the film treats its Martian setting—explosions and automatic weapons fire in atmospheric bubbles, unprotected human flesh surviving prolonged exposure to the vacuum and temperature of a Martian surface. As for the visual effects, Sharon Stone is lethal and luscious as a gymnastic *femme fatale*, but the Mars underground is the usual blend of cyberpunk decor and the bar scene from STAR WARS—lots of leather and latex, dwarves and mutants. Given all the buildup, the ultimate revelation of the underground leader mutant (an abortion-from-the-stomach) is disappointing. Even Rob Bottin nods, apparently. The Mars matte jobs look pretty much like Mars matte jobs. Hell, for fifty—sixty?—million dollars, Verhoeven could have shot the exteriors on location!

The finale is another one of those go-for-broke, overlong holocausts that makes you glad the last reel of THE ABYSS was deep-sixed. None of this nonsense comes close to capturing the wonder of an earlier cinematic moment when a doctor from Rekal drops into Quaid's reality frame and attempts to persuade him that he is actually experiencing a dream. Quaid—and we—almost believe him. The play of fantasy/reality and dream screen/cinema screen makes for a riveting interrogative moment. But later, when Quaid looks outside himself



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and sees the bastard he was—is?—and refuses to embrace his own former identity, the film only hints at the emotional depth it might have achieved. Instead, it goes for a magic show blow out and planetary cataclysm. Next time Hollywood draws on the master of space and time for inspiration, let's have more Dick and less shtick. □

DICK TRACY

continued from page 57

using every one of our shots, which is phenomenal when you consider that most directors leave tons of mattes on the cutting room floor, all because they don't move the story along. He really went non-stop to get the movie right, and Warren's been terribly misunderstood because of that. He's been forced into doing unwanted interviews on talk shows, where people are more concerned if he slept with Madonna than about the environment he was laboring to create. When a picture like DICK TRACY gets hyped to death, that only makes people criticize it when the film doesn't live up to their expectations. Warren never intended for anyone to find the meaning of life here, but for them to leave entertained."

Lloyd's good feelings, however, don't extend to production designer Richard Sylbert, Beatty's long-time collaborator who remarked that he was "saddled" with Disney's matte department. "I was pretty amazed that he could say that, and then turn around and tell everyone he loved our work," said Lloyd. "It's my suspicion that Sylbert made that comment before he'd even seen the film, and that's uncalled for, especially from such a respected and successful person. It wasn't very enjoyable to work with him either, but I'm a

firm believer that if you can't say anything nice about a person, then keep your mouth shut!"

Lloyd said he hoped that DICK TRACY's incredible matte work will clue Hollywood into surreal looks for other productions. "We're selling images to an audience, and I don't think realistic mattes would have worked for DICK TRACY," said Lloyd. "When you call attention to every brick, you only get someone in the audience who says 'nice matte.' We wanted to create an unusual environment right off, and let people know we weren't going to get any hokier. This means you can shoot any genre in a different way. You don't have to take a camera to Monument Valley to film a western anymore."

In the meantime, Lloyd said he plans to pursue a career as a director, using his achievements on DICK TRACY as a stepping stone. "I'll be leaving Disney to see the rest of the world, because I don't want to be solely known as an effects man," he said. "That's my biggest obstacle to directing features." □

MISERY

continued from page 11

think he's sometimes frightened to just go with—how can I put this—he's so talented that sometimes he's over-violent because he's afraid he'll lose his audience. And he won't because he's brilliant as a character writer.

"Listen, I think basically if we don't scare people with this movie, the movie's not going to work," summed up Goldman. "So, it's not Shirley Temple. But I think some of the horrific elements are out. But I know she's going to be scary. I know it. Those are two wonderful characters." □

JACOB'S LADDER

continued from page 5

tured things. I tried to use images from Frances Bacon—tortured, blurred shots, red streaks and sharp pieces which, when you freeze frame this stuff, looks just like Bacon's drawings." Gordon J. Smith's Toronto-based FxSmith company provided the makeup effects.

"I am rarely convinced that my films are going to do well," said Lync. "I had no idea FATAL ATTRACTION would be a hit. But I just saw all but one of the reels of JACOB'S LADDER for the first time, and I'm so fucking excited. This is a movie audiences are going to yap about." □

PSYCHO IV

continued from page 47

sequels, Thomas viewed only Perkins' original performance (when Norman was closest to the age at which Thomas plays him) to help pick up the character's mannerisms. Garris praised the actor's cooperative nature, pointing out, "A lot of people would be afraid to put on a dress and a wig."

The film began production in Florida during the opening week of the new studio's theme park tour earlier this year—and in the middle of the rain season—shot 25 days, and managed to wrap on schedule, July 3, then returned to Universal Studios in California for postproduction. Garris' assessment of Universal's new facility was succinct: "Working on the stage was great; working on the back-lot sucked." Explained Green, "You just have so much noise. Although everybody cooperated, including the Hard Rock Cafe, which is fifty yards away, you just couldn't cut it off. Even when we were shooting all night

long, and the park was closed down, there was still cleaning going on for the next day. And we were close to the highway.

"There are reasons to shoot in Florida—it's a right-to-work state—but to say it was better to shoot PSYCHO IV in Florida when everything is here in California?—I would have to say no. Universal wanted to open the park with a major production being shot there—that was the main value, and that was fine." Green added with a smile, "If we're quoted out of context, we'll never work for Universal again."

Having brought the Hitchcock saga full circle to reveal Norman's origins, Zaloom doesn't believe the series is exhausted yet. "There could be a PSYCHO V," he said. "That will probably be the last one—maybe." □

CHILD'S PLAY 2

continued from page 15

It does take time to coordinate human actors with Chucky, though. For instance, in a scene where Chucky trips Christine Elise, it took 33 takes—not only did we have to coordinate Chucky's movements, but Elise had to hit her mark by walking backwards. The most takes we ever did in the first show was fourteen or fifteen."

Yagher also directed the film's second unit ("all the Chucky stuff without actors"), including a scene where Chucky buries Andy's new Good Guy doll, and action footage such as when Chucky attempts to hang on to the hood of a car Elise is driving. "The second unit was a blast to do," said Yagher. "We would go off on our own, and I could work with Chucky and puppeteers without a crew of sixty people standing around looking at their watches." □

LETTERS

SEXISM ON STAR TREK

If Patrick Stewart is indeed opposed to the treatment of women as objects, why then was "Captain's Holiday" produced? [STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION 21:2:48] And why, as is rumored, was he himself pleased with both the episode's concept and realization? If this is not "rampant sexism," I shudder to think what Mr. Stewart's definition of that term might be.

ST:TNG does indeed fall "rabidly short when it comes to addressing the question of women in society." Given that, why has it become, for all intents and purposes, "The Picard Show?" Dr. Crusher and Counselor Troi are rarely treated as anything other than plot functionaries. Troi suffers the most in terms of sexism ("The Price" and "Menage a Troi" being prime examples of this), while Dr. Crusher is generally ignored.

I support the idea of a romance between Picard and Crusher, mainly because it might possibly allow Gates McFadden more air time—what a shame that this seems the only way to increase her visibility. I fear, however, that

such a romance would be based on the same sexist imperatives that characterized that of Picard and Vash in "Captain's Holiday." Another paradox: the more we see women on the show, the more likely they are to fall into stereotypical behavior.

Taylor Harrison
Iowa City, IA 52245

PAUL BLAISDELL

Here's another correction regarding the Paul Blaisdell career article, or more precisely, that issue's cover [20:5]. I'm quite sure that is not Jackie Blaisdell on the cover, but rather Bob Burns' wife Kathy.

Tim Murphy
El Monte, CA 91733

[Right, Jackie is pictured on page 26 of the issue.]

WHO PRODUCED AMITYVILLE CURSE?

I'd like to set the record straight on THE AMITYVILLE CURSE [21:1:14]. Allegro Films acquired the property from First Films and Hans Holzer. The movie was produced by Allegro, with First Films acting only as the American distributor. I was the director and

a co-executive producer with A.B. Goldberg. The producer was Franco Battista.

Some of Allegro's other production credits include: CRAZY MOON, starring Kiefer Sutherland; BLIND FEAR, starring Shelley Hack; BACKSTAB, starring James Brolin; MINDFIELD, starring Michael Ironside. And Allegro is now completing its most ambitious production to date, SCANNERS II, in collaboration with Rene Malo.

Tom Berry
President, Allegro Films
Montreal, Canada

[First Films press materials referred to the project as a "First Films/Allegro" production with First Films topper Michael Krueger credited as "co-producer."]

TIPPETT'S OSCAR

Phil Tippett was a member of the Oscar-winning ILM effects crew that worked on THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK. But he did not win an Oscar for his work on the film as you guys have mentioned several times in your articles for ROBOCOP and ROBOCOP 2 [21:1:16]. He did win for his major role as creature and stop-motion supervisor on RETURN OF THE

JEDI. He also won an Emmy for visual effects on the DINOSAUR! TV special in 1985. In 1988 he was nominated for WILLOW.

Chris Clifford
Virginia Beach, VA 23454

[The official production notes on ROBOCOP incorrectly credited Tippett's Oscar. Thanks for the reminder. We'll get it straight, eventually.]

THE FEEBLES, JUST THE FACTS

In the midst of preparing last issue's article (21:2:14) on Peter Jackson's puppet film MEET THE FEEBLES, Southgate Films publicist Ziggy Kozlowski called to tell us that the film's U.S. title had been changed to JUST THE FEEBLES, which we dutifully altered in the text and logo for the article. Ziggy called again to thank us for the coverage when he got the issue and to point out that what he actually said was "The title has been changed to just THE FEEBLES."

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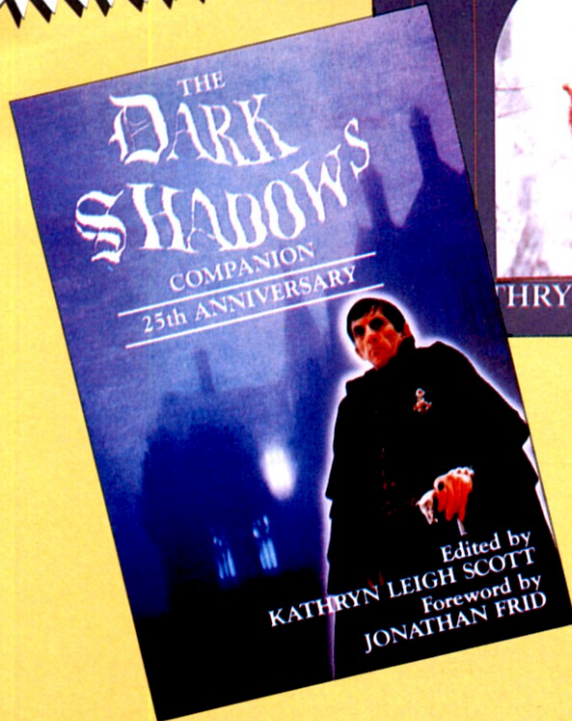
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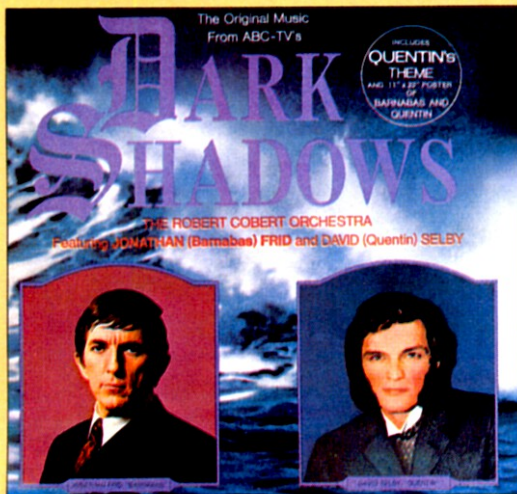
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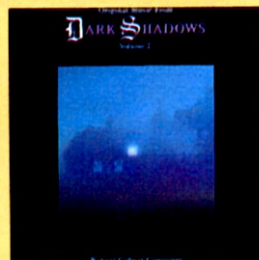
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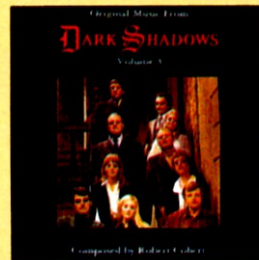
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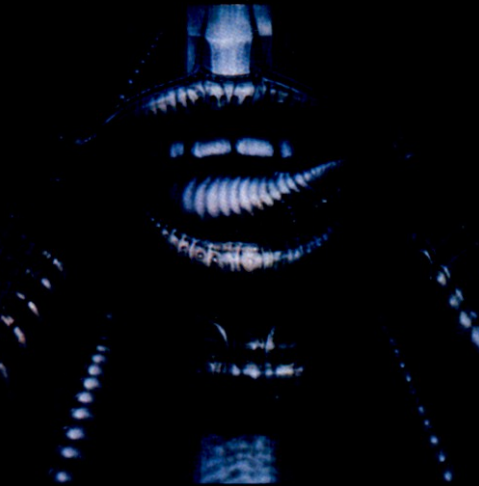
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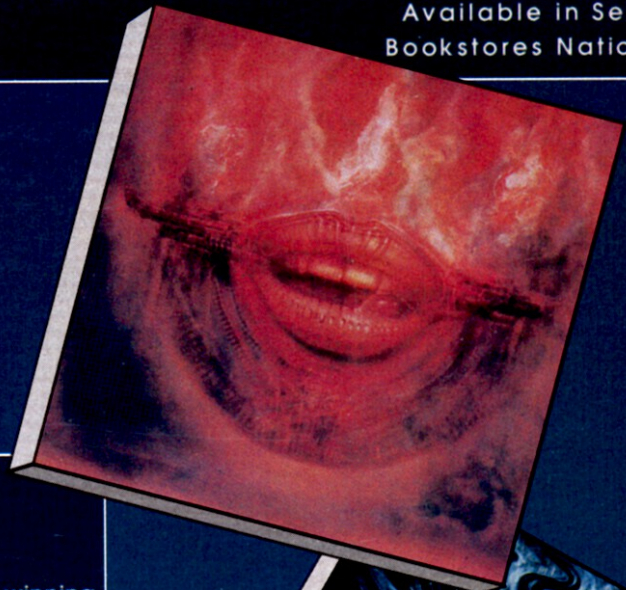
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